An Analysis of the Newspaper Coverage of Latter-Day Saint Temples Announced or Built Within the United States from October 1997 Through December 2004

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF LATTER-DAY SAINT TEMPLES ANNOUNCED OR BUILT WITHIN THE UNITED STATES FROM OCTOBER 1997 THROUGH DECEMBER 2004

by

Kevan L. Gurr

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

Master of Arts in Religious Education

Religious Education
Brigham Young University
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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and has been found to be satisfactory.

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

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF LATTER-DAY SAINT TEMPLES ANNOUNCED OR BUILT WITHIN THE UNITED STATES FROM OCTOBER 1997 THROUGH DECEMBER 2004

Kevan L. Gurr

Religious Education

Master of Arts in Religious Education

President Gordon B. Hinckley, the fifteenth president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, excited the membership of the Church by increasing the number of temples available to members. He announced that the Church would construct smaller buildings — as compared with existing temples at the time — thereby allowing for greater numbers of temples to be built. He set a goal to build 50 temples in a two and half-year period: double the number the Church had ever attempted to build in any decade. Thirty-four of these temples were built in the United States, and newspapers — both local and national — covered the construction of these temples with over 330 articles. This thesis analyzes the newspaper coverage of temples built within the United States from October 1997 through December 2004, and draws important conclusions from this data regarding the nation's perception of the Latter-day Saint temples.
Each of the 330 articles was scored according to specific criteria, and grouped by region (as defined by the Church’s official web-site). Then, after individual and regional scoring, overall newspaper exposure for the Church’s small temple building was scored for the United States as a whole. As each temple’s unique story unfolded in the newspapers, the general public’s view of the Church’s small temple construction became clear. Although quite a few of the proposed temples experienced opposition with regard to building specifics and anti-Latter-day Saint efforts, Church departments and members negotiated, compromised, and softened the impact of this opposition, and many people welcomed the temples into their communities.

In addition to gaining a sense for the public’s viewpoint, some global observations emerged from this study, revealing the importance of professionalism within Church departments and programs when working with the media and public. A few observations also revealed three lessons to be remembered in future temple building relations. But most importantly this study shows that not only did the Lord’s revelation through a prophet open the way for the Church to build more temples, but as a by product of this revelation, the smaller temple concept helped to lessen the controversial and negative articles that the larger temples tended to generate.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Accomplishing a task such as a thesis takes considerable encouragement from a supporting cast. In this project, my supporting cast has first consisted of professors Donald Q. Cannon, Richard O. Cowan, John B. Stohlton, and D. Kelly Ogden, who instructed and guided me through the technical and academic aspects of the project. I am grateful to them for their constant availability and suggestions.

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Finally, I have always felt the constant love and support from Sherri, my wife. From moving to Utah during the summer to take the Religious Education courses, to countless hours, evenings, and days of not only editing this work but being the lone caregiver in the home during the writing stage of this project, she has been my closest confidant and help throughout this journey. I will forever remember the discussion after which I saw clearly the direction this project needed to go, and the day the final words were typed and our family was dancing for joy around the living room.

My greatest hope in pursuing a Masters degree was to do something that would be of benefit to others, but now I realize that this project has most of all been beneficial to me personally, and I am totally satisfied.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

“We approach the subject of temples with deep reverence,” explains Elder Boyd K. Packer, an Apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He continues, “The work of the temples is transcendent in nature, its prospects so supernal that the mind of man could not have conceived it. . . . This work and the ordinances central to it came from Deity.”1 As we can conclude from Elder Packer’s statement, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints cannot fully enjoy all that their religion has to offer without participating in the ordinances of the temple. The subject of temples is so significant and sacred to Latter-day Saints that it inspires both great interest and numerous questions among the public. Some common questions deal with what goes on inside a temple, why it is closed to some people, and where the next one will be built. These topics receive special coverage in newspapers whenever a new temple is built. This Introduction will discuss the background of temple building, the thesis’s structure for cataloging and analyzing newspaper coverage of temples, and the pattern for sequencing articles that emerges therein.

Background

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as “the Church,” took 120 years to construct the first 50 operating temples. Shortly after the dedication of the St. Louis Missouri Temple—the 50th in operation—the prophet of the Church, President Gordon B. Hinckley, made an announcement that completely changed

traditional temple building and sparked great excitement among Church members worldwide.

**The Man Behind the Announcement**

President Hinckley has had a long-term interest in temple building. This interest began in 1954, when President David O. McKay, the president of the Church at the time, instructed Brother Hinckley, then an employee in the Church’s missionary department, to find a way to minimize the number of temple workers needed to perform temple ordinances. This assignment deepened Brother Hinckley’s desire to be involved in the progress of temple building and temple work throughout the world. Consequently, on numerous occasions after he became a General Authority in 1958, Elder Hinckley shared information with the general membership of the Church to keep them abreast on the status of temple building. On one such occasion, in his October 1974 general conference address, Elder Hinckley described some of the great hardships and sacrifices Latter-day Saints living outside of the United States experienced in order to attend the temple:

I have seen a group of Latter-day Saints from Japan who had denied themselves food to make possible the long journey to the Hawaii Temple. In London we met those who had gone without necessities to afford the 7,000-mile flight from South Africa to the temple, in Surrey, England. . . . I remember hearing in New Zealand the testimony of a man from the far side of Australia who, having been previously sealed by civil authority and then joined the Church with his wife and children, had traveled all the way across the wide continent, then across the Tasman Sea to Auckland, and down to the temple . . . . As I remember his words he said, ‘We could not afford to go. Our worldly possessions consisted of an old car, our furniture, and our dishes. I said to my family, “We cannot afford to go.” Then I looked into the faces of my beautiful wife and our beautiful children, and I said, “We cannot afford not to go.” If the Lord will give me strength, I can work and earn enough for another car and furniture and dishes, but if I should lose these my loved ones, I would be poor indeed in both life and in eternity.³

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These testimonies, although powerful in showing the faithfulness and commitment of these Saints, exposed an underlying problem of distance between many members of the Church and their temples. Ten years after he shared these stories, President Hinckley, then second counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, excitedly proclaimed, “We are living in the greatest era of temple building ever witnessed . . . . In little more than two and a half years [1984-1986] we have dedicated sixteen new temples.” He then expressed his desire for an increase in future temple building: “The sacred and important work that goes on in temples must be accelerated, and for this to happen, it is necessary that temples be taken closer to the people rather than having the people travel so far to temples.”

In accordance with President Hinckley’s statement, the decade of the 1980s proved to be a boom in temple construction, even out-producing the succeeding decade of the 1990s by one temple. When President Hinckley became the prophet of the Church, he reiterated his feelings on the importance of temple access to the Saints: “Our people cannot partake of all of the blessings of the gospel unless they can receive their own temple ordinances and then make these ordinances available to those of their kindred dead and others. If this is to happen, temples must be available to them. I feel strongly about this. . . . I have a burning desire that a temple be located within reasonable access to Latter-day Saints throughout the world.” President Hinckley expressed this desire often. During another address he stated, “I hope to see temples so located that members of the

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Church can travel to one of these sacred houses within reasonable distance of their homes.\textsuperscript{6}

\textit{The Announcement and the New Goal}

After offering a sincere prayer while visiting one of the more remote locations of the Church, President Hinckley received an answer to his desire of having members of the Church closer to temples. To share his revelation with the members, President Hinckley made the following announcement:

I believe that no member of the church has received the ultimate which this Church has to give until he or she has received his or her temple blessings in the house of the Lord. Accordingly, we are doing all that we know how to do to expedite the construction of these sacred buildings and make the blessings received therein more generally available. \ldots But there are many areas of the Church that are remote, where the membership is small and not likely to grow very much in the near future. Are those who live in these places to be denied forever the blessings of the temple ordinances? While visiting such an area a few months ago, we prayerfully pondered this question. The answer, we believe, came bright and clear. We will construct small temples in some of these areas, buildings with all of the facilities to administer all of the ordinances.\textsuperscript{7}

After decades of experiencing this frustrating dilemma of proximity, the answer finally came “bright and clear” to the prophet. The announcement electrified the whole body of the Church, but especially the members who lived such long distances from a temple. Many members began to wonder where these smaller temples were to be built. Initially, the smaller temple concept was to be tested in three designated locations. However, before the trial period began, President Hinckley once again astonished the membership of the Church by setting a goal:

\begin{quote}
As I have previously indicated, in recent months we have traveled far out among the membership of the church. I have been with many who have
\end{quote}

very little of this world's goods. But they have in their hearts a great burning faith concerning this latter-day work. They love the Church. They love the gospel. They love the Lord and want to do His will. They are paying their tithing, modest as it is. They make tremendous sacrifices to visit the temple. They travel for days at a time in cheap buses and on old boats. They save their money and do without to make it all possible. They need nearby temples - small, beautiful, serviceable temples. Accordingly, I take this opportunity to announce to the entire Church a program to construct some 30 smaller temples immediately.⁸

Never had the Church attempted to construct so many temples at one time; further, no undertaking of the same magnitude has been attempted since then up to the present time (2005). Not only did President Hinckley announce this gigantic effort, but he also set his sights on accomplishing the bulk of the project by the end of the year 2000. His goal was to have at least 100 temples dedicated by that time. To put the task in perspective, the greatest number of temples constructed prior to this time in a single year was six (1983 and 1984), and the most built in a decade was 26 (1980s). This second declaration, then, showed President Hinckley's ambition as he declared that the Church would attempt to build 49 temples in a two-and-one-half-year period of time.

During 1999, 15 temples were dedicated—more than double the number that had been the previous annual high—and then in the year 2000, a record-breaking 34 temples were dedicated. By the end of that year, the prophet had exceeded his goal, as the Church had 102 operating temples. Since these two booming years in which a total of 49 temples were built worldwide, temple construction has slowed significantly. Over the next four years 17 temples were dedicated.

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Newspaper Coverage of the Temples Built in the United States during this Period

Thirty years ago, after the dedication of the Washington D.C. Temple, Elder Hinckley remarked, “A vast amount of newspaper and magazine space has been given the temple, and radio and television have carried its story far and wide. It is doubtful that any building constructed in the East in recent years has attracted so much attention.” With so much coverage given in 1974 for only one Latter-day Saint temple, one is left to wonder, “What type of coverage did this substantial temple building period receive?”

Although many media resources were employed in covering the story during this period, due to accessibility, this project will focus solely on newspaper articles. The parameters of this project will be to analyze the newspaper coverage of the temples built in the United States from the dedication of the St. Louis Missouri Temple in 1997 through 2004. These years will be referred to as “the period” in this work.

Structure for Cataloging and Analyzing Newspaper Coverage of Temples

Research

Although there were numerous temples built outside of the United States during this period, this project will only focus on newspapers published within the United States, excluding Utah-based papers. This exception was imposed due to the disproportionately high number of articles that were published by the Utah newspapers. Therefore, adhering to these parameters, this thesis will catalogue and analyze temple building coverage in the major local newspapers of the 34 U.S. cities in which temples were built since October 1997.

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These 34 cities, arranged in the order they appear within this work, are as follows:

1. Fresno, California
2. Redlands, California
3. Newport Beach, California
4. Sacramento, California
5. Kona, Hawaii
6. Medford, Oregon
7. Spokane, Washington
8. Columbia River, Washington
9. Anchorage, Alaska
10. Billings, Montana
11. Reno, Nevada
12. Snowflake, Arizona
13. Albuquerque, New Mexico
14. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
15. Houston, Texas
16. Lubbock, Texas
17. San Antonio, Texas
18. Baton Rouge, Louisiana
19. Columbus, Ohio
20. Bismarck, North Dakota
21. Detroit, Michigan
22. St. Paul, Minnesota
23. Winter Quarters, Nebraska
25. Columbia, South Carolina
26. Raleigh, North Carolina
27. Louisville, Kentucky
28. Memphis, Tennessee
29. Nashville, Tennessee
30. Birmingham, Alabama
31. Palmyra, New York
32. Harrison, New York
33. Manhattan, New York
34. Boston, Massachusetts
Many different avenues were used to obtain the articles, such as newspaper archives, library archives, and the Church Temple Department. Overall, 330 articles were collected.

**Organization**

After the articles were collected, they were grouped into geographical regions that coincide with the regions designated on the Church website located at www.lds.org/temples/geographical. This website breaks the United States into the following seven regions:

- West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska
- Mountain West (excluding Utah)
- Southwest
- Midwest
- Southeast
- East
- Northeast

This geographical breakdown provided order as the articles were collected, and likewise, led to a natural organization for the chapters of this work. Hence, the proceeding seven chapters each cover one of the above-mentioned regions, with one variation from the Church’s website. On the website, Alaska and West Canada are assigned in the same region, but because West Canada is outside of the United States, and is therefore not included within the parameters of this study, the state of Alaska will be assigned to the West Coast and Hawaii region. Consequently, this region will be referred to as the “West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska Region.”
Structure

Each chapter begins with a brief historical overview of the Latter-day Saint influence in the region followed by a summary of the articles written about each temple either announced or built in the region since October 1997. Finally, each chapter concludes with an overall analysis of the newspaper coverage of each temple and a summary of the findings in the region as a whole.

Article Analysis Principles

Process

The same three steps of analysis were applied to each article collected: (1) each significant topic covered in the article was noted, (2) each source was noted, and (3) the source or sources’ commentary was analyzed. Being as objective as possible, though some subjective judgment was inevitably involved, each noted topic and source was assigned a score.

Scoring

The following objective parameters for scoring the topics and sources are as follows. First, topics that projected a favorable outlook on the temple and the Church, such as temple purposes and design, project details, positive economic impact on the community, or open house information, generally received between a +.10 and +1.0 score. If a topic was continually highlighted in such a positive way that it moved beyond the general coverage, somewhere between a +1.1 and +2.0 score was given.

Second, topics which reflected an unfavorable viewpoint toward the temple and the Church, such as religious efforts against the temple and the Church, public opposition to the temple’s structure, or fringe or fanatical topics such as polygamy, race, caffeine,
etc., generally received between a -0.10 and -1.0 score. Likewise, if an article continually highlighted one of these topics in a negative manner that moved beyond general coverage, then somewhere between a -1.1 and -2.0 score was given.

After the topics presented in the articles were noted and scored, the sources and nature of their comments were considered. Parameters for scoring the sources and their comments fall into four categories: 1) positive commentary from non-Latter-day Saint sources, 2) positive commentary from Latter-day Saint sources, 3) negative commentary from non-religious-oriented sources (public officials, etc.), and 4) negative commentary from sources affiliated with other churches (ministers, etc.). Details concerning these four categories follow.

1) Positive Commentary from Non-Latter-day Saint Sources

This category includes positive comments, statements, or written material from a minister, representative of another faith, or non-member of the Church in any capacity (such as a public official). Such quotations scored somewhere between +1.10 and +2.0, depending on their strength. The following quotations are two examples of scores within this range. First, a minister remarked concerning the Albuquerque Temple, "[The temple] doesn't bother me. We certainly don't deal with the same target audience, I'd guess you'd say." This statement relates a rather indifferent but positive attitude toward the Church; however, because it came from a minister of another faith and didn't reflect negativity, such a statement falls into this category, and scores at the lower end: +1.10. Second, a Catholic Bishop in Spokane, Washington, defended the Church.

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as being Christian in a highly controversial article, "Many Christian denominations maintain cordial relations with the Mormon Church. In Salt Lake City, for example, Mormon officials attended the recent installation of the Catholic bishop and contributed money to the renovation of the cathedral. Although theological differences—big and little—exist it is downright discrimination to openly challenge the beliefs of their religion." Situated in an article dominated by anti-Latter-day Saint rhetoric, this statement received a +2.0 score.

2) Positive Commentary from Latter-day Saint Sources

This category includes positive comments, statements, or published material from Latter-day Saint sources, such as General Authorities, Church spokespeople, local priesthood leaders, or local members. Such statements scored between +.10 and +1.0. Most of the members quoted in the national papers were local priesthood leaders acting as appointed Church spokesmen, and for the most part their comments were thoughtful and professional. On other occasions, articles quoted members of the Church in attendance at temple events, and these quotes varied in content and relevance. In fact, they are the main reason there exists a scale with statements from members of the Church. Some members do not consider how best to explain religious ideas to the media; therefore, some statements do not reflect Church doctrine as clearly as others.

3) Negative Commentary from Non-Religious-Oriented Sources

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This category includes negative comments or statements from disgruntled neighbors, government officials, etc., and such comments received between a -0.10 and -1.0. It is important to note that not all opposition to Latter-day Saint temples is harshly negative in nature. For instance, there are legitimate structural concerns that have their places in newspaper articles. Another cause for opposition is commonly called the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) concern, as was evident with the Reno Nevada Temple, Sacramento California Temple, and other temples. The NIMBY concern is common with high profile or large-scale projects, and, when detected in articles, this concern was scored with less negativity because its origin was common and to be expected. In other instances, articles in which a temple was mentioned focused on unrelated negative topics. One example surfaced in the Arizona Republic in relation to the Snowflake Arizona Temple. The article reported that state funds had been used to fly state government representatives to the temple’s open house. Although connected to negative press, the negativity was not toward the temple or the Church, and therefore this article scored higher than articles directing negative remarks toward temple building.

4) Negative Commentary from Sources Affiliated with Other Churches

This category includes negative comments, statements, or writing from representatives of other faiths or from anti-Latter-day Saint sources, and such scored -1.10 and -2.0. The types of statements found in this category originate from unfairly prejudiced sources. Consider the following examples. One of the

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most anti-Mormon articles in this study appeared in the *Daily Gate City*, (Keokuk, Iowa) in connection with the building of the Nauvoo Illinois Temple. This article quoted almost entirely from an excommunicated Church member who remarked, "If Mormons are so family oriented, why is Utah number four (in the U.S.) in teen suicides and number 13 in suicides overall. Why do they have the highest divorce rate, and lead the nation in antidepressant use? Why does violence against women increase every year more rapidly in Utah than anywhere else? Why in the last decade has Utah had 2,000 shaken-baby deaths?"¹³ None of the statistics shared in the article were referenced or related to temple building concerns, and statistics can often be misrepresented to try to show a particular point of view. This quote received a -2.0 score because of the anti-Mormon source and the negative nature of the comment. Another example of a quotation that falls into this category was printed in *The Tennessean*, a Nashville, Tennessee, newspaper. This article explained, "The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) snubbed its Page High School Male Athlete of the Year, Aaron Walker, when adult leaders discovered he is a Mormon. The FCA is a Christian organization, its leaders said, and Mormon theology strays too far from orthodox Christianity to deserve the name."¹⁴ The quoted received a -1.5 score because it shows the FCA’s unfair prejudice toward Mormon athletes.

It is important to note that positive comments from ministers, non-members, and city officials score higher on this study’s scale than positive comments from Latter-day Saint

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sources because of the perceived bias of each of these groups. The same reasoning of perceived bias allowed negative comments from neighbors and government officials to score higher on the scale than negative comments from non-Mormon ministers and anti-Mormon sources. It is also important to realize that built into the scoring scale is the allowance for a reporter to reference sources from both sides of the story, which negate each other, resulting in a balanced approach and neutral score for an article. Additionally, it was necessary to carry the scoring to the hundredth place to allow for flexibility to consider the origin and intent of statements made by the various sources.

When an article’s topics, sources and their comments were scored, the numbers were averaged to determine an overall score. This overall score was then compared to the following scale and assigned one of the five designations. The scale and the designations are as follows:

- (-1.21 to -2.0) “Anti-Latter-day Saint” approach
- (-.41 to -1.20) Unfavorable approach
- (-.40 to +.40) Balanced approach
- (+.41 to +1.20) Favorable approach
- (+1.21 to + 2.0) “Pro-Latter-day Saint” approach

This academically established method of scoring has been adapted from Dr. Richard O. Cowan’s scale, instituted in his Stanford University dissertation entitled, “Mormonism in National Periodicals.” As this work performs an analysis of comparable media, Dr. Cowan’s scale was entirely appropriate. The numerical designation associated with the word designations provided the framework for the scoring to be understood. As an example of using the scale, let’s view the following fictional situation [the numbers are color coordinated to show their origination]: an article’s topics and sources received three
(3) scores of +1.0, +1.0, and -1.0. To calculate the article’s score, these scores would be summed \((1.0 + 1.0 + [-1.0] = 1)\), and then averaged as follows: \((1 / 3 = +.33)\). When averaged, the three scores equated a +.33 score for this article, which, according to Dr. Richard O. Cowan’s scale, falls into the “balanced approach” category, signaling that the article reported both positive and negative sides of the story.

When all of the articles published surrounding the construction of a specific temple were scored, a chart was created to show a summary of each article’s topic and overall score. Here is an example of such a chart (representing the Fresno California Temple):

As seen on the chart, five articles were collected for the Fresno Temple: each article’s score is noted in green and major emphasis in red. Then the overall article scores were averaged to produce a complete score for that particular temple’s newspaper coverage. With regard to the Fresno California Temple example, the scores averaged to reveal a +.72 result \([1 + .25 + 1 + .33 + 1 = 3.58]; [3.58 / 5 = +.72])\). This result shows that the Fresno California Temple received “favorable” newspaper coverage according to the Cowan scale.
After every temple within a specific region was scored, the conclusion in each chapter contained an additional chart—similar to a temple’s specific article review chart—which compared all the individual temple scores in the region. Here is an example from the West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska Region:

![West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska Region's Averages](image)

As seen above, the chart lists all the temples reviewed in the region in red, and also shows the averaged score of all the newspaper articles printed for that temple in green. By averaging the individual temple scores together, we can determine the region’s overall approach to temple building as covered in its newspapers. The West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska Region would be determined as follows: \((0.55 + 0.57 + 0.45 + 0.88 + 1.25 + 0.29 + 0.77 + 1 + 1 = 6.76); \overline{6.76} = +0.75\). This +.75 score shows that the region as a whole received “favorable” newspaper coverage.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this thesis includes an analysis of patterns and observations within the nation’s newspaper coverage of the temples. In all, the patterns and observations that surfaced through a reading of the nation’s newspapers revealed professionalism, orderliness, preparedness, and a predominately consistent effort on behalf of the Church in regards to its handling of media and community related efforts. There were, however, a few instances reported in the newspapers which when reviewed could serve as “learning experiences” for the Church’s future temple building. Looking
Article Sequencing Pattern

Upon close examination, a pattern emerged in the sequencing of articles printed by many newspapers. This pattern contains seven key phases: (1) announcement, (2) groundbreaking, (3) construction in progress, (4) Angel Moroni, (5) media day, (6) success of the open house, and (7) dedication. Realizing that this pattern was too consistent to be coincidence, I learned that the Church was the driving force behind the timing and organization of these press releases. An understanding of this pattern up front will prove beneficial in reading the following seven chapters.

Announcement

In most newspapers, the first article printed followed the Church’s announcement that a temple would be built. In this “announcement” article, it was common to find statements regarding the Latter-day Saint membership growth in the surrounding area, the increase in temple building worldwide, the distance that local Church members were currently traveling to reach the nearest temple, and the uses and purposes of a temple. A typical explanation about a temple’s function reads: “Temples are used for proxy baptisms of the dead, in which especially devout church members stand in for deceased...
relatives or ancestors who have not been baptized, and for the sealing of marriages and family units for time and eternity."\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{Groundbreaking}

The second article generally followed the temple's groundbreaking ceremony. The "groundbreaking" article typically reported the length and cost of the project, and the timetable for the public open house and dedication of the temple. Additionally, the article included a few quotes from speakers at the ceremony and reactions from those in attendance. Often, it also included a brief description of the temple's uses.

\textit{Construction in Progress}

A "construction in progress" article appeared in a handful of newspapers, which showed a few pictures of the building phase of the temple, quoted construction managers as to the progress of the project, and reminded the public as to the timetable for the public open house. An open house is a specified length of time when any member of the public, regardless of religious or non-religious affiliation, can take a tour through the completed temple prior to its dedication.

\textit{Angel Moroni}

Many papers printed an article relating the placement of a statue of the "Angel Moroni" on the steeple. This article usually explained who Moroni was and what his connection was to early Church history. It also quoted the feelings of a few people in attendance when the statue was raised, and reminded the public about the upcoming open house.

\textsuperscript{16} J. Michael Parker, "Mormon temple slated for S. A. Area adherents to the faith now number 12,084," \textit{San Antonio Express-News}, March 29, 2003, Religion Section, page 7B.
Media Day

Almost every paper ran a “media day” article that followed the media’s tour of the temple prior to the public open house. These articles contained lengthy, detailed information about the interior of the temple, including locations from which materials were imported and overall costs of the project. They also included brief explanations about the dressing rooms, bridal lounge, baptistry, endowment, sealing, and celestial rooms of the temple. These articles were generally placed on the front page of the paper, and accompanied by colorful pictures of the temple’s interior. Most of these articles consisted of the reporter’s own words and feelings of the tour, mingled with a few quotes from the person giving the tour. The “media day” articles generally provided great exposure and advertisement for the public open house, containing times, dates, locations, and other details that the public needed in order to attend the open house.

Success of the Open House

Frequently, following the media day event, a “success of the open house” article appeared. Such articles informed readers about how many thousands of people attended the temple open house and how much time remained before the open house ended. These articles typically explained that once the open house was completed, the temple would be closed to the general public.

Dedication

The final common article printed was the “dedication” article. This article usually included the reporters’ observations of the cornerstone ceremony (usually highlighting President Hinckley and his interaction with those in attendance), including a brief explanation as to the contents of the articles being sealed in the cornerstone of the temple.
Frequently, this article also reported the feelings and reactions from members attending the ceremony.

Understanding this article-sequencing pattern at the outset of this work will more fully equip readers to understand the following seven chapters. Additionally, the information given with regard to the structure of this paper, the process of analyzing the articles, and the scoring scale will serve as a useful reference for synthesizing the material presented herein.
Chapter 2
The West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska Region

Latter-day Saint History in the Region

The history of the Latter-day Saints in the West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska region—composed of California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, and Alaska—begins before Brigham Young's proclamation that the Salt Lake Valley was "the right place." As the land migration west commenced, one group of migrating Saints took the trek by sea from the East Coast around Cape Horn. They stopped in Hawaii, and then sailed to their final destination on the West Coast. Along with U.S. Mormon Battalion members, these Saints helped establish the first forts and communities in California.

California

As early as 1851, a Church stake was formed in San Bernardino, California, but was dissolved six years later because of a significant percentage of inactivity among the Saints in the stake. Most of the members of the stake who remained faithful left California and moved to Utah. Later, however, other Church members moved in, and, during the 1920s, three stakes were formed.

1 Church History in the Fulness of Times—Religion 341-343, Salt Lake City, Utah: Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 333.
Hawaii

About the same time that the California San Bernardino Stake was formed, 1851, missionary efforts began in Hawaii. In 1855, the Book of Mormon—one of the Church's primary books of scripture—was translated into Hawaiian. Missionary efforts of proselyting, teaching, and baptizing progressed in these islands until the missionaries were called home for the "Utah War" in 1857. Shortly thereafter, Church affairs in Hawaii began to deteriorate, and order was only reestablished when two apostles—Elders Lorenzo Snow and Ezra T. Benson—were sent to Hawaii to correct the problems. Later, large numbers of Hawaiian Saints migrated to Utah and formed a colony that lasted for twelve years. Thereafter, many of these Saints moved back to Hawaii, and this migration strengthened a number of faithful Saints in Hawaii. Soon, a temple was built on the island of Oahu in 1919. Uniquely, the temple was dedicated sixteen years before the first stake was organized in the islands in 1935.

Oregon

Surprisingly, Church growth initially progressed faster in Oregon than in any other state in this region. Attracted to the state by ranching and logging opportunities, a large number of members moved in, and the first West Coast stake was organized there in 1901. Although the initial growth was rapid when compared with the growth of the surrounding states, this trend has since reversed: now each of Oregon's neighboring states has larger Latter-day Saint populations.

Washington

One of these neighboring states is Washington. Although missionary efforts in Washington began before World War II, it was not until that time that a greater number
of Saints moved into the state. Increased job opportunities brought about by the War encouraged an influx of Church members. Washington's first stake was established in 1938.

**Alaska**

The final state in this region is Alaska, and Church growth in the state has been very late in developing. The state's first stake was organized in 1961, and although Alaska is home to the fewest number of Saints of any state in this region, it received one of the three trial smaller temples when President Hinckley originally made his historic announcement. Interestingly, each of the five states in this region received at least one temple during this period (1997-2004) of increased temple construction.

**California**

Prior to President Gordon B. Hinckley's announcement of smaller temple construction, California already had three operating temples—the Los Angeles California Temple (1956), the Oakland California Temple (1964), and the San Diego California Temple (1993). In 1997, four additional temples were announced, two of which have been completed – the Fresno California Temple (2000) and the Redlands California Temple (2003). Currently the Newport Beach California Temple and the Sacramento California Temple are under construction. First, we'll review the newspaper coverage of the completed temples.

**Fresno California Temple**

The *Fresno Bee* provided all the newspaper coverage for the Fresno California Temple, and because this is the first temple reviewed, it is appropriate to share more in-
depth excerpts from the articles to provide the reader a general feel for newspaper coverage given.

The opening sentence of the groundbreaking article announced, "Central Valley members of the Mormon Church will celebrate the groundbreaking today in Fresno for a temple that will be used for sacred ceremonies." The construction timetable portion of the article informs the public about the length of the project, the open house period following its completion, and finally, The Bee’s description of the temple’s usage reads, "Temples are sacred buildings in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Marriages, baptisms and religious instructional sessions are performed inside. The Fresno building is among what the Church leaders describe as a new generation of temples that are smaller than most of their predecessors." All the information provided by this article and the sources quoted, two local stake presidents, was positive. The article averaged a +1 score.

Following this initial article, a second did not appear until the media day tour of the temple. It informed the public about the open house, featured pictures of the building’s interior, and contained a more in-depth explanation of the use and purpose of the temple. The bulk of this article consisted of the reporter’s own impressions and descriptions of his visit inside the temple. Phrases such as, "Two of the rooms are eye-grabbers," and "A window on one faith’s connection to eternity opened a crack Thursday," express his impressions. The reporter also quoted two Church leadership sources—Elder John B. Dickson, of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and Brother

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2 Nzung Xiong, “Mormon Temple to Rise in Fresno Serving 28,000 Members. The Temple will be California’s fourth,” The Fresno Bee, March 20, 1999, Section B1.
3 Ibid.
Wilford Lynn Dredge, the first temple president of the Fresno Temple—who happened to serve as this reporter's tour guides. Pictures accompanied each of these glowing descriptions, and the article was situated on the front page of the paper, providing great publicity for the public open house. This second article's overall score was +.75.

Six days following the second article, a third reported on the success of the open house, and provided information about the final opportunities for the public to visit the temple: "More than 20,000 people have flocked to the northwest Fresno Temple since Saturday. Up to 20,000 more were expected before the opportunity ends Tuesday night." In addition to the open house information, three local teenage members of Church expressed their feelings of the open house tour, and one local stake president commented on the over all success of the open house. This article received a +1 score.

The final two articles run by the Fresno Bee were printed the day before and the day following the dedication. The Bee’s article prior to the dedication recapped the uses of the temple, announced President Hinckley’s officiating over the dedication, offered a brief explanation about the cornerstone ceremony and what was placed within the cornerstone cavity, and finally, provided some detail about the format of the dedicatory sessions. The following is an excerpt from this article:

Gordon B. Hinckley, the 89-year-old president and prophet of what is popularly called the Mormon Church, will officiate at four 90-minute dedication ceremonies for the temple, located on Valentine Avenue, south of Sierra Avenue ... . Temples are the holiest sites in the faith and are open only to devout believers who must display “recommend” letters from their bishops. There, in a series of finely decorated, immaculate rooms, members clad totally in white can “seal” their marriages together for eternity, symbolically baptize the dead into church membership, receive instruction and contemplate their linkage to the divine ... . About 500 people will be in the temple for each service, which will be telecast via closed circuit to other

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5 Matthew Kreamer, "20,000 Visit New Mormon Temple in Fresno — Temple is only the Fourth in the State and 78th in World," The Fresno Bee, March 30, 2000, Section A1.
faithful in a nearby meetinghouse. Hinckley will remain in the temple during most of his visit. He will leave the first service to apply grout to a cornerstone behind the temple. The cornerstone will contain artifacts from the Mormon faith and from the history of the Valley Mormon community.6

Interestingly, the author of this article sought out two non-Latter-day Saint clergy who had attended the temple’s open house to get their reaction to the tour. A reverend was quoted as saying, “[The temple] is a beautiful building. That’s really all I have to say. They were very gracious, very kind to us.”7 He ended his comments with, “We have had our differences.”8 The second minister described the temple as a “well done, first class building, with an absolutely beautiful baptismal font.”9 Although evident differences exist between the Church and these sources, they were nevertheless kind in their comments. A local stake president represented the Church, and combining the scores of each of these sources and topics, this article scored a +.33.

The final article recapped the dedication of the temple, focusing mostly on the cornerstone ceremony. The author described President Hinckley’s witty, jovial personality as he interacted with the gathered crowd. Many of the members in attendance were quoted in the article, and most focused on President Hinckley’s position in the Church as a prophet. One Latter-day Saint lady exclaimed how excited she was for her daughter to assist President Hinckley in placing some mortar around the cornerstone because she would be so close to “the prophet of God.”10 Another woman expressed,

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
"He's the living prophet on the Earth, so he carries a special spirit." Every source quoted in the article was a member of the Church and all the comments were extremely positive. This article scored a +1.

In summary, the Fresno Bee ran five articles on the temple. The first covered the groundbreaking, the following two reported on the open house information, and the final two related information about the dedication. The following chart shows each article's score:

Averaging the scores of these five articles resulted in the Fresno Temple receiving a +.82 score. This averaged score indicates that the Fresno Bee's coverage was favorable.

Redlands California Temple

The next temple built in California was the Redlands California Temple. Two articles concerning this temple appeared in the Redlands Daily Facts, and the Los Angeles Times also printed three articles concerning this temple.

Like the Fresno Bee, the Redlands Daily Facts' first article coincided with the temple's groundbreaking ceremony. This article opened by introducing the Church's long, 150-year history in the San Bernardino Valley, and ended by relaying how rapidly

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the Church has grown in the Valley in recent decades. After this brief history and current status of the Church, the article turned to the groundbreaking service itself. The article’s author focused on statements relating to the impact of the temple on the surrounding community, quoting Elder Dieter Uchtdorf: “[The temple] will uplift and enhance in many ways and increase the value in the properties around it.”12 The author also relayed that a compromise was quickly reached concerning the time at which the temple lights would be turned off at night: “The City Planning Commission approved the 18,000-square-foot temple with a 130-foot spire in October after developers and Church officials agreed to turn off the lighting on the temple by 10:30 p.m. on the days the temple is open and 10 p.m. on Sundays and Mondays when the temple is closed.”13 This article’s focus was positive. Both sources quoted were Latter-day Saint sources; therefore, this article received a score of +1.

The second article printed by the Daily Facts covered the dedication of the temple. Again, like the Fresno Bee reporter who covered that temple’s dedication, this reporter also commented on President Hinckley’s jovial interaction with the audience during the sealing of the cornerstone, as well as the feelings of those in attendance. One source, Kirsten Palmer, expressed that she “was particularly moved by the experience of being part of a crowd of strangers that, nevertheless, shared so much.” She then stated, “I was so amazed to feel the spirit so strong and the crowd was just hushed.”14 Another family, the Fijardos, were “excited to see the prophet for the first time.”15 More jubilant

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13 Ibid.
Church members were quoted in the article, and only briefly did the article mention a lone protestor located near the temple during the ceremony: the author reported that “most church members seemed generally unbothered by the protestor.”¹⁶ In all, this article was full of Church members’ excited reactions to the event, and the article scored a +1.

As mentioned before, the Redlands Temple also received some exposure in three *Los Angeles Times* articles. The first article was printed shortly following the Church’s announcement that three temples would be built in California—one in Newport Beach, another in Sacramento, and, of course, one in Redlands. Unlike the *Redlands Daily Facts*’ articles, this article explained eternal weddings and vicarious baptisms for the dead. It also provided a brief description of the insides of temples. These focuses merited a +1 score.

The second *LA Times* article compared the Redlands Temple’s quick completion to the Newport Beach Temple’s long, difficult road through public official’s approval. This article will be discussed in depth in the Newport Beach portion of this chapter, but it scored a -1.88.

The final *LA Times* article announced the Redlands Temple’s open house to the public, and offered a detailed description of the interior of the temple, highlighting the usage of each room. This article scored a +.75.

Overall, the *Redlands Daily Facts* and *Los Angles Times* together printed five articles that explained the Redlands Temple to the public. The following chart recaps the articles’ scores:

The combined coverage averaged a \( +0.37 \) balanced score.

\[ \text{Redlands California Temple Articles} \]

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\text{Announcement} & \text{Groundbreaking} & \text{Comparison} & \text{Open House} & \text{Post Dedication} \\
1 & 1 & -1.88 & 0.75 & 1
\end{array} \]

\[ \text{Newport Beach California Temple} \]

Although it was announced at the same time as the Redlands Temple, the Newport Beach Temple did not enjoy similar local acceptance. The \textit{Los Angeles Times} has currently run nine articles on the Newport Beach Temple, and the project has yet to reach the open house stage. A twenty-six-month legal battle slowed the construction of the temple and brought increased negative publicity. The \textit{Los Angeles Times} reported the contention about the temple to be over the color, height, and lighting of the building. The Church has owned the land upon which the temple will be built for many years, but in recent years a multi-million dollar neighborhood has been built up around the site. Therefore, the developer of the neighborhood, the Irving Co., who feared the temple would hamper home sales, brought up the first concern. The Irving Co. requested that the exterior of the temple not be the usual eye-catching brilliant white; rather, the company encouraged the Church to have the temple blend in more with the neighborhood colors. From this beginning, the opposition toward the temple grew as neighbors joined the developer and demanded changes in additional features about the temple. The neighborhood organized a group to argue their views with the city's planning board and
other public officials. The neighbors felt the temple would lower their property value because it had ultra brilliant night lighting, blocked views of the surrounding countryside, and sported an "obnoxiously" towering steeple. By the time the project was taken before the public officials, tension between the two sides had reached its peak.

Prior to public meetings, the Church explained the details of the project at neighborhood meetings. In these meetings, the Church reassured the neighbors that traffic would not be increased dramatically, and that the lights would be positioned to keep homes from excess illumination. Also, the Church brought in a huge extending crane to the site in attempt to demonstrate that the height of the steeple would not block views. However, the neighbors were not satisfied with these efforts, and their disgruntled opposition slowed the public official’s approval of the project. One newspaper article explained, "Homeowners in an expensive new section of Newport Beach are fighting plans for a Mormon temple, complaining about the towering steeple and dramatic evening lighting. Unfortunately, Church officials initially fed local opposition by asserting that the temple’s design had been decreed by God, as interpreted by a church prophet, and was “nonnegotiable.” If such an assertion by local Church leaders was made, it resulted in the Church appearing to be unbending and difficult. Then the credibility of this assertion was questioned when, later, the Church proposed a second set

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of plans for the temple. One neighbor responded, "Mormon leaders haven’t been forthright in disclosing details of the project... What it comes down to is credibility."\(^{19}\)

The Church’s second design of the temple implemented many of the suggestions desired by the neighbors and the Irving Co., but these changes did not prove sufficient for the neighbors, and so the battle of opinions continued. This reaction caused one local Latter-day Saint leader to wonder "if there’s an anti-Church undercurrent to many of the complaints."\(^{20}\)

As time passed, the Church made more concessions, which included turning lights off earlier than planned, lowering the steeple further, and changing the exterior color of the temple. Finally these concessions met the approval of the city’s public officials, and the project was passed, to the dismay of many of the neighbors. Currently, the temple is under construction and no additional articles have appeared in any newspapers.

The first five articles about the Newport Beach Temple that appeared in the Los Angeles Times cited primarily Latter-day Saints and public meetings as the sources for information. Although these articles remained informational in their presentation, there were hints of problems developing between the two groups; however, a casual newspaper reader would not have understood the extent of the problem until the sixth article was printed. The first four articles each scored a +1 because the sources were two local stake presidents and the topics were positive. The fifth article also quoted from a local stake president, but the reporter included negative comments in the article about the brooding


conflict. This article scored +.20. The sixth and the seventh articles both quoted extensively from enraged neighbors, and interestingly, neither of these articles cited sources from the Church’s position. The sixth article scored -1.88, and the seventh a -.97. By the eighth article, the public officials had approved the plans, and the neighbors’ attorney summarized their reactions: “[My] clients were pleased with the results.” This article’s sources were a stake president, a public official, and two somewhat mellowed neighbors. This article scored +.66. The final article reported the groundbreaking ceremony for the temple, describing the local stake president as “being overcome” to finally have the temple under construction. In addition to his comments, the article also quoted a member of the Seventy and another stake president. It scored a +.75.

In all, the nine articles published in the *Los Angeles Times* about the Newport Beach Temple averaged a +.31 balanced score. Here is a break down of each article’s score:

21 David Reyes, “Newport Approves Mormon Temple; The Church’s decision to reduce a steeple’s height wins the support of the city and most neighbors, who feared the tower would hurt land values,” *Los Angeles Times* Nov. 14, 2002, Section B3.

22 Zeke Minaya, “Work on Mormon Temple to Begin; Church and city officials break ground on the first of the religion’s most sacred facilities in Orange County,” *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 16, 2003, Section B3.
Sacramento California Temple

The Sacramento Temple was likewise entangled in legal battles over its structural design, despite the fact that this temple was not located near a residential neighborhood. In fact, it will be located near a major interstate freeway on some land originally zoned for industrial use. Once again, some residents of Sacramento worked to challenge city approval of the project. Their arguments against the Sacramento Temple were similar to the complaints raised about the Newport Beach Temple. Residents claimed that the lighting and height of the building would disrupt views: “Views from nearby Lake Natoma and surrounding residential areas, and the nighttime artificial light would decrease the quality of recreation and [water sport] training occurring on the lake.”

Not only was nighttime lighting a concern, but another resident also said that the temple would be “a daytime visual intrusion.” Aside from the lighting and building size, a concern unique to this California temple was that “artificial lighting could damage birds . . . causing them to fly in endless circles around the lights until they possibly crash into the structure.”

Public officials struck down each of these concerns, questioning the logic of each argument. First, they overturned the bird and lighting concerns due to the fact that located right across the street from the Temple site was the city’s largest auto mall which displayed many high powered, glowing, beam lights and brighter-than-normal lighting all over the premises. One public official asked, “Where was [this opposition] task force, 

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
when the Folsom Auto Mall was being reviewed?" To which the spokesman for the task force replied, "We've complained about the auto mall, and we're chagrined about it. But now we can't do a thing about it."

A spokesman for the Church also pointed out that the temple lights would not "flash, blink, or glare [like the auto mall lighting], but rather shutters and other mechanisms will be used to control and restrict excess light."

Finally, in response to the concern about the structure blocking views and being an intrusion, another public official reasoned to the contrary. He felt the temple would be one of the more attractive spots along the industrial zoned stretch of freeway.

Up to the present time, the Sacramento Bee has run four stories covering the temple. The first article announcing that a temple would be built in Sacramento quoted exclusively from the director of public affairs for the local Church. The content of this article covered the local history of the Church and the purposes of the temple in correct and easily understood terms. Therefore, a score of +1 was received.

Eight months later, the same reporter wrote a second article which was basically a reprinting of the first with the additional information of the exact location of the temple and a few quotes from two local Latter-day Saints expressing their excitement. This article likewise received a +1 score.

The third article covered the controversy about the temple, and was fair in giving equal time to both sides of the argument. Public officials, project engineers, a biologist (concerned about the birds), and upset neighbors were quoted. The article scored a +.50.

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26 Ibid.
Lastly, a year later, a fourth article covered the groundbreaking ceremony, over which President Hinckley presided. The reporter complimented President Hinckley’s sense of humor: “If his human spokesman provides an accurate representation, God must have a good sense of humor. Gordon B. Hinckley, the 94-year-old man Mormons call their ‘prophet, seer and revelator,’ was in Rancho Cordova on Sunday afternoon to dedicate a new Mormon temple. Along with his prayers, he made a few jokes. ‘We ordinarily don’t break ground for a temple on the Sabbath day,’ Hinckley said. ‘I hope the ground is soft, so we don’t have to labor on the Sabbath.’” The remainder of the article touted that, second to Utah, California would have more temples than any other state. Additionally, it quoted a few local members: “The traffic to the Oakland temple is terrible, and living six minutes away from the new temple, I won’t have any excuses not to be here as often as possible.” This article ended by explaining the importance of the temple to the members of the Church, and by giving one final quip from President Hinckley as he saw ground had already been tilled, “The ground has been broken up. So we won’t break the Sabbath if we take a shovel to it.” This article scored a +1.

In summary, the Sacramento Bee’s articles averaged a favorable score of +.88. Here is a diagram of the article’s scores:

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29 Laurel Rosen, “Church breaks temple ground—The Mormon facility in Rancho Cordova will be the seventh in California,” Sacramento Bee, August 23, 2004, section B1.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
Hawaii

Prior to President Hinckley's historic announcement, the first temple in this West Coast, Hawaii, Alaska Region was the Hawaii Laie Temple built in 1919. Since then, one small temple has been constructed in Kona, Hawaii.

Kona Hawaii Temple

One might think that travel between the different islands of the state of Hawaii would not be difficult or expensive, but James Layton, a member of the Church from the big island of Hawaii who travels to the island of Laie to attend the temple explained that "each trip costs the family of three more than $240 for airfare, plus rooms, car rental, and food. Some families can't afford the trip." 32 Smaller temples were intended specifically to reduce such burdens; therefore, a second Hawaii temple was announced.

Three major papers serve the islands of Hawaii: the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, the Honolulu Advertiser, and the West Hawaii Today. A total of eight articles were printed among the three papers, and surprisingly, all eight of the articles received front-page exposure. The articles revealed no major problems with public officials or neighbors. In fact, the Kona Hawaii Temple was one of the most quickly built in this region—from

announcement to dedication was a period of 10 ½ months. The only opposition to the temple appeared in one miniscule sentence of the eight articles: “At least two people do not welcome the church, however, and demonstrated Tuesday, passing out literature against LDS on Kalani Street.”33 Aside from this sentence, the articles were full of supportive, positive comments from non-Latter-day Saints, and ecstatic, explanatory comments from local Latter-day Saints.

One non-Latter-day Saint said, “We have seen temples from the outside, but what went on inside was a mystery. [The tour] has been very instructive.”34 Another non-Latter-day Saint visitor explained, “We knew very private and wonderful things happen here.”35 And finally, another woman expressed, “I love the symbolism that family life goes on and on into infinity like the reflection [in the celestial room mirrors].”36

The West Hawaii Today printed over half of the articles covering the Kona Temple. The first two articles quoted a local building commissioner, and its tone was positive. These articles each scored a +1. The third article scored a +2 because of many positive quotations from state officials in attendance at the temple’s groundbreaking. The final two articles each scored +1. One of these articles quoted exclusively a member of the Seventy as he led the reporter through a tour of the temple on the media day, and the other quoted a construction superintendent in the article featuring the Angel Moroni.

36 Ibid.
The *Honolulu Advertiser* printed two articles about the Kona Temple. Both of these articles scored +1, and quoted extensively from local members of the Church, local directors of public affairs, and a member of the Seventy.

The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* only printed one article about the temple, but it quoted extensively from non-Latter-day Saints who had toured the temple; and their comments were extremely positive. This article scored a +2.

In review, the following chart shows what each article scored:

![Kona Hawaii Temple Articles](image)

The combined average of the eight articles printed by all three newspapers was +1.25. This score was the highest in the region and placed the Kona Temple's newspaper coverage in the pro-Latter-day Saint range. Such a high score came from the large percentage of positive statements from members and non-members alike.

**Oregon**

As in Hawaii, prior to President Hinckley's historic announcement, Oregon only had one temple—located in Portland and dedicated in 1989. Now one more has been constructed.

**Medford Oregon Temple**

The *Mail Tribune*, the local newspaper serving the Medford area, printed eight articles concerning the Medford Oregon temple. The *Mail Tribune* articles on the temple
proved to be some of the most unique examples of reporting in the region because five of the eight articles were all printed on one day. On that day, almost every article in the paper focused on the Latter-day Saint temple and religion, and non-members' thoughts about the temple.

The first two articles were printed on separate days, focusing largely on the economic benefits of having the temple constructed. One of the local stake presidents pointed out in the first article that not only would “the temple draw converts to the fold, but it will also have an economic impact on the area. There will be jobs for local people when it’s being built. And once it’s completed, it will draw additional people from Lakeview, the coastal area and northern California. They’ll eat, buy gas, stay in motels and have a huge economic impact on the area.” The article also quoted from public officials who were likewise excited and positive about possible economic benefits. This article received a +1.5.

The second article, published about four weeks later, announced additional economic benefits of the temple: a local architectural firm had been hired to design the temple, and other opportunities would occur as local contractors were bidding on the project. No other newspaper in this region had such a strong emphasis on the economic advantages of a temple. This article scored a +1.

About a year later, with no follow-up stories about the actual economic benefits of the construction of the temple, five articles were printed in one day. This multi-article exposure coincided with the temple’s open house. One article offered a brief history

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38 Ibid.
concerning the origins of the Church, and ended by focusing on negative elements of polygamy and blacks not holding the priesthood.\(^ {39}\) This article scored -1.

Another article reported solely the reaction of religious leaders of other faiths in the area about the temple’s completion, and a clear conflict of interest influenced these comments. The article quoted the first religious leader as saying, “They say they are Christian, but I don’t agree with them. The Mormon Church is the most acceptable cult in the world. They center their teachings around one man, Joseph Smith.”\(^ {40}\) The second pastor remarked, “The Mormon Church basically preaches another Jesus than what evangelical orthodox Christian churches teach. Their Jesus is not the Jesus of the Bible, and I have a genuine burden for people who don’t know the grace of God.”\(^ {41}\) Both of these pastors announced that they were going to be proactive in combating the presence of the temple in the area. One of these ministers was holding workshops at which ex-Mormons were explaining ‘the truth about Mormonism’. The second minister promised to have a “prayer walk” during his tour of the temple in which he would pray “that the influence of the temple will not be strong, and that it will not have an effective ministry because it’s not a true ministry.”\(^ {42}\)

Rather than ending the article by quoting any Latter-day Saint source, it gave a weak and short rebuttal from two moderate and more understanding ministers who

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\(^ {40}\) Sara Murphy, “Local religious leaders welcome temple/While some have reservations about Mormon beliefs, others say ‘there’s room for all of us,’” \textit{Mail Tribune}, March 26, 2000.

\(^ {41}\) Sara Murphy, “Local religious leaders welcome temple/While some have reservations about Mormon beliefs, others say ‘there’s room for all of us,’” \textit{Mail Tribune}, March 26, 2000.

\(^ {42}\) Ibid.
simply stated that they felt the temple would not have much influence on their congregations. This article scored a -1.20.

A third article reported a question/answer session between a Mail Tribune reporter and a local Latter-day Saint stake president, but the questions mostly centered on fringe religious questions, including wearing special undergarments, and drinking decaffeinated products. This article served to raise more negative perceptions about the Mormon faith, and scored a -1.

The fourth article followed the more conventional pattern of newspaper articles written throughout the region. It reported how many visitors had been through the open house up to that point, and briefly explained what to expect on the tour. This article scored +1.

The fifth article of that day focused on the rapid growth of the Church in the area, revealing the need for the temple and focusing on the religious uses and purposes of the temple; however, it also contained more negative quotes from local ministers. This article’s scores when averaged equated to a neutral score of 0.

Despite the negative representations of the temple, one final article appeared five days later in the Mail Tribune, reporting that the total number of visitors during the open house far exceeded anyone’s expectation, as more than 45,000 people toured the building. The earlier negative articles might have led to an increased public interest to see the temple. This final article scored +1.

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43 Ibid.
44 “Stake President defines lifestyle,” Mail Tribune, March 26, 2000.
46 “Mormons open doors to faith/Central Point temple will serve district membership,” Mail Tribune, March 26, 2000.
47 “Mormon temple draws 45,000,” Mail Tribune, April 1, 2000.
Not only was the Mail Tribune's coverage of the story the most unique in the region, but its approach was the most biased as well. Here is a graph reviewing how the eight articles scored:

The average of the eight articles printed in the Mail Tribune was +.16, the lowest overall score of any coverage in the region.

Washington

The state of Washington was home to only one temple—Seattle, Washington (1990)—before President Hinckley's announcement. Since then, the Church has constructed two new temples: one in Spokane, and the other in Richland. Richland, Washington, is situated near two other cites on the Columbia River, so the area is commonly referred to as the tri-city area. Therefore, the Church named the new temple the Columbia River Washington Temple, although it was built in the city of Richland.

Spokane Washington Temple

Although the Spokesman—Review's coverage of the Spokane Washington Temple was more mainstream than that of the Medford Temple, the opposition was similar. The first article, which appeared on the front page of the paper, was typical in announcing the temple and explaining its uses. The second article contained glowing comments from Church members and promises from General Authorities during the groundbreaking.
ceremony. More than 500 members attended the meeting at which Elder F. Melvin Hammond, a member of the Seventy, promised the mayor of Spokane that the “temple will be a blessing to your community.” A third article, which also appeared on the front page of the paper, was extremely positive in giving facts about the rapid growth of the Church in the surrounding area. The article stated that “close to 80,000 Mormons lived in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, rivaling Roman Catholics as the largest single religious denomination.” Overall, these first three articles were favorable toward the Church, and they each earned a +1 score.

Opposition appeared in the fourth front-page article. Like the ministers in Medford, Oregon, the largest evangelical congregation in Spokane was sponsoring a large anti-Mormon convention which was “dedicated to ‘exposing the deception’ of the Mormon Church.” All of the times and the location of the meetings were printed in the first paragraph of the article, and the featured speaker of the convention and his credentials were announced as follows:

Pastors . . . sought Mill Mekeever, founder of the California-based Mormonism Research Ministry, to counter the media blitz that traditionally coincides with the building of a Mormon Temple. Mekeever said he was raised in a part of California with a large Mormon population. When he converted to Christianity, many of his Mormon friends pressed him to join their faith. After researching Mormons, Mekeever said he felt called by God to share his work. Calvary Assistant Pastor Duane Wilson said Mekeever was asked to come because, ‘he has a heart of love for Mormons. He understands they are deceived because they don’t have an accurate portrait of Jesus Christ.’

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After the first eleven negative paragraphs of the article, an unexpected friend defended the Church. The Spokane Catholic Bishop, William Skylstad, described the Mormons as friendly to members of other faiths, and gave an example of the Church donating money to renovate the Catholic cathedral in Salt Lake City, Utah. He went on to express that “although there are theological differences ‘rarely does one group openly challenge the beliefs of another.’” Finally, he declared that the Calvary Chapel’s actions were “downright discriminatory.” The article ended with the assistant pastor of Calvary Chapel responding to the Bishop’s remarks, “We are supposed to love one another, but it doesn’t mean we have to agree, especially if it has eternal consequences.” This article scored a -1.27.

Interestingly, the same day this controversial article ran on the front page, another article appeared deeper in the paper. It announced and provided a brief biography of Frank Wagstaff, a local Spokane Latter-day Saint, who was called to serve as the new temple president. This article earned a +1 score.

About a month after these two articles, another pair of articles appeared in the paper. The author of the first controversial article wrote this second pair. Though he had also written two glowing articles about the Church, his final two articles mixed both positive and negative perceptions of the Church.

One of these articles made the front page of the paper. It moved between quotes from Latter-day Saint women who were preparing for the temple’s open house, to quotes from a local anti-Mormon. Obviously, this author was trying to present both sides, but

53 Ibid.
both sides were problematically biased. Luckily and appropriately, the reporter ended the article by referencing a much less biased source—Jan Shipps. Jan Shipps is a non-Latter-day Saint scholar on “Mormonism” who explained the following about the Church:

Mormonism is no longer a church embedded in a particular culture—white, conservative, and middle class. Now it’s a belief system present in many cultures. The church has 11 million members, more than half of them outside of the United States. Its members are also much more likely to be involved in social or political activities than in the past. In the mid-1980s, the church hierarchy issued a proclamation that encouraged its members to get involved in the world around them. This was a dramatic change, because it said the church is only one part of your life and you are supposed to be a part of the culture where you live instead of separate from it. It used to be that if you were Mormon, all your time and energy were tied up with the church. Now, Mormons are just as likely to be volunteering at the school, leading a Girl Scout troop, running for office. It used to be that the lifestyle of Mormons and small numbers made them different. But as the three-martini lunch had disappeared from American society, no longer do no drinking, no smoking, no caffeine and no swearing seem so odd. Now it’s the temples. The temples distinguish them from being just another church.55

Shipps' approach offers the public correct, unbiased information. This article scored a +.57.

Printed on the same day, the second article appeared on the eighth page of the first section, and focused mostly on the temple’s interior. However, to draw attention, it begins with four “subjects of persistent gossip and myth”56 about the Church. These subjects were polygamy, racism, cults, and special underwear. Once again, this author both focuses on the building and presents controversial issues. The article scored a 0.

Different authors wrote the final two articles. One article appeared in the economic section of the paper and focused on the hope that the temple would “help the

hotel industry by attracting regional visitors.”57 Sources for the article were the president of the Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce, the president of the Spokane Hotel-Motel Association, and the general manager of the Spokane Valley Mall. There was no indication whether any or all of these people were Latter-day Saints, but the article showed the temple as a benefit to the Spokane community. It therefore scored a high +2.0.

The final article was published on the weekend of the temple’s dedication, but rather than covering the dedication itself as was common among most other newspapers, it covered a fireside that President Gordon B. Hinckley gave to the youth in the Spokane area. This brief article quoted President Hinckley as saying to the youth, “We’re counting on you; don’t do anything that would weaken the family chain. Be true and you will bring honor to this Church.”58 This article was favorable in its comments and scored a +1.0.

Nine articles concerning the Spokane Temple were printed by the Spokesman Review. Here is a recap of the scores:

![Spokane Washington Temple Articles](chart)

They averaged a favorable +.70. One Evangelical Church mounted the only reported opposition to the temple, but the rest of the ministers and non-Latter-day Saints who expressed their views about the temple and the Church in the articles were positive.

Columbia River Washington Temple

The Church built a second temple in the state of Washington during this period, and placed it in the southwestern portion of the state where three cities lie closely together. The aptly named Tri-City Herald is the local newspaper for the area. The day after President Hinckley announced that a temple would be built in the area, the Herald printed an announcement, along with quotes from excited local Church leaders. For example, one leader stated, “There was an awe and a sense of excitement when President Hinckley made the announcement.” Another said, “There is a real thrill among the members, and people are calling to donate property and everything else.”

Aside from these quotes, the remainder of the article followed the typical explanation about the uses of the temple.

The next article surfaced about six months later and speculated on the possible location of the temple site. Usually articles aren’t printed for speculation’s sake, but this author was breaking the news that the Church had requested a permit for a site rather than announcing anything that had really happened. Two weeks later, the speculated site was confirmed, and the project’s timetable was revealed. Each of these articles was short and simple in content.

One year later, the final article was printed, which informed the public about the temple's open house. Again, this article was typical in content—descriptive details of the interior and explanations of how Latter-day Saints believe that the temple links all generations and families together.

All four articles from the *Tri-City Herald* were featured on the front page, and were written by different reporters. Nothing was reported or quoted that merited a negative score in the *Tri-City Herald*; therefore, all four articles received a +1 score, and that was the average for the Columbia River Washington Temple. The following graph shows the same:

![Columbia River Washington Temple Articles](image)

**Alaska**

Alaska was the only state in the West Coast Region that prior to 1997 did not already have a temple. But since then, the state has received one of the original three smaller temples announced when President Hinckley introduced the concept of smaller temples to the Church membership.

*Anchorage Alaska Temple*

Interestingly, during the period of small temple building, not only was the Anchorage Alaska Temple built and dedicated, but it was also remodeled to be much larger, and then rededicated. Originally, the *Anchorage Daily News* ran five articles
between the temple’s announcement and the first dedication, but two additional articles were printed four years later for the second open house and rededication.

Like the Columbia River Washington Temple’s coverage, all seven of the articles about the Anchorage Alaska Temple received a +1.0 score because they contained positive information and only quoted from Latter-day Saint sources. The first article was printed following the well-attended groundbreaking ceremony. The second article offered one paragraph announcing the public open house. The third and fourth articles were printed on the day following the media tour of the temple. One of these articles explained the need for a temple in Alaska and the function of the temple. The other reported an interview with the architect of the building, and described what guests should look for during the tour of the building. The fifth article informed the public about the new local temple president and provided a brief sketch of his life.

Four years and 3000 converts in the Alaska area later, the temple was remodeled and doubled in size to accommodate the increased attendance due to the growth of the Church. The remodeling project expanded the Anchorage Alaska Temple’s size to be comparable with the other small temples. Corresponding with the rededication of the temple, it was once again open to the public for tours, and two articles were printed during this time. The first one consisted of only a few sentences announcing the open house information. The second article was printed following the media day visit to the temple.

As mentioned, all the articles were favorable toward the Church and the temple, and therefore the overall average score was +1.0. Here is a summary of the articles:
West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska Region Summary

The West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska Region received more temples (9) within the time period studied than any other region in the United States. A total of 60 articles were printed concerning the temples in this region. Summarized below are the average scores for each temple:

Fifty-four of the articles received a favorable score, while six were unfavorable. The most unfavorable article in the region was a *Los Angeles Times* article about the Newport Beach Temple reporting neighborhood disagreements. One reason it scored so unfavorably was because of the stance originally taken by a local stake president about the temple's design being “divinely inspired” and therefore “unalterable.” Learning from the negative feelings and publicity that such a stance created, future stake presidents will continue to be invited by the Church Public Affairs Department to be extremely
thoughtful in their comments to the media. Throughout this region, stake presidents were the most quoted Latter-day Saint sources in the articles.

The Medford Oregon Temple received the most overall unfavorable publicity in the region. Interestingly, the negative comments were all aimed at the Church itself rather than the temple. On the other hand, the Kona Hawaii Temple received the most favorable publicity in the region. With almost no opposition, members and non-members alike were extremely positive in their expressions of praise for the temple and the Church. The articles themselves offer no indication as to why this would be, but perhaps it is due to a difference among cultures, or due to the large Latter-day Saint population in Hawaii.

In this region, opposition to the temples, and therefore negative publicity, came for three reasons. First, in California, the major opposition to the Newport Beach, Sacramento, and Redlands temples was because of the buildings' design. Second, in Spokane, Washington, and Medford, Oregon, the major causes of opposition were ministers and anti-"Mormon" groups—more doctrinal in nature. Third, negative publicity came from reporters themselves by focusing on fringe, controversial topics, or by allowing negative personal bias to show while reporting facts.

As a whole, the newspaper coverage in this region was complete, informative, interesting, and favorable. It is apparent that while there was some opposition, it was widely overcome, because the Church, in general, is respected and has many friends in the West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska Region. As a whole, the region averaged +.72 in newspaper coverage.
Chapter 3

The Mountain West Region

Latter-day Saint History in the Region

The Mountain West Region includes Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado. The Church web-site does not include Utah in this region, but rather places it in a region of its own. The Latter-day Saint history in this region began with the Saints’ migration to the Great Basin. This migration left an imprint on each of these Mountain West states, and permanent settlements were established some years later. After designating the Great Basin area as the gathering place, Brigham Young asked select groups of Saints to leave and colonize these Mountain West states.

Initially, colonization began with establishing trading posts along major traveling routes. A “Mormon” trading post was built in Genoa, Nevada (1851), and a second was erected near present day Fort Laramie, Wyoming (1853). Settlements quickly sprang up around each of these posts, and the first stake outside of Utah was organized in Nevada in 1856. During this same period, some Church members were asked to establish

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1 Deseret News Church Almanac 2005, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Salt Lake City, Utah, 2004, 210-211.
3 Deseret News Church Almanac 2005, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Salt Lake City, Utah, 2004, 210-211.
settlements among the Bannock and Shoshone Indians in central Idaho (1855). \(^4\) Sadly, all of these colonization efforts in Nevada, Wyoming, and Idaho stalled when the United States government sent Johnston’s army to Salt Lake City in 1857. Not knowing the intentions of the advancing army, each of these settlements was abandoned and the Nevada stake was discontinued when the settlers returned to Utah.

After the intentions of Johnston’s army were realized and peace was once again established, colonization efforts began again. In this second effort, the first settlement was established in Franklin, Idaho (1860). The settlement at Franklin was so successful that over the next eighteen years an additional sixteen settlements were founded in the surrounding area. This rapid growth led to the first permanent stake outside of Utah being established in 1869. \(^5\)

Seeing the success of the Idaho settlements, President Brigham Young invited other Saints to establish colonies next in Arizona. Between 1873 and 1876, many Saints tried to find suitable locations in Arizona, but the extreme climate caused many of the settlers to eventually return to Utah, or to look for easier spots to settle. However, those who stayed, over a period of years, were successful in establishing settlements throughout Arizona. From these efforts, three stakes were created in rapid succession: 1878, 1882, and 1883. Only one of these three stakes survived the test of time. \(^6\)

By the late 1870s and early 1880s, simultaneous colonization efforts were made in Wyoming (1877), Colorado (1878), and Nevada (1880s). Of these three states,...

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Colorado’s settlements grew fastest, and a stake was organized there in 1883. Wyoming and Nevada established their first stakes in 1892 and 1912, respectively.

Interestingly, during these years of colonization, Saints were never invited to settle Montana, and most of the members who moved there before missionary efforts were begun in 1896 fell away from the Church. However, when the Montana mission opened, efforts were made to find and reactivate these members, but the work was slow and only a few successes were realized. By 1930, missionary efforts had resulted in ten branches of the Church being organized, and from then on the Church experienced steady membership growth in the area. By 1953, Church growth was substantial enough to merit the state’s first stake.\(^7\)

Besides Montana, each of the other states in the Mountain West region has enjoyed a long Latter-day Saint history. Prior to the smaller temple announcement in 1997, this region already had five temples: Mesa Arizona Temple (1927), Idaho Falls Idaho Temple (1945), Boise Idaho Temple (1984), Denver Colorado Temple (1986); and Las Vegas Nevada Temple (1989). Neither Wyoming nor Montana had a temple. Since the announcement, three additional temples have been added to the region, and two more have been planned. The three temples built were the Billings Montana Temple (1999), Reno Nevada Temple (2000), and Snowflake Arizona Temple (2002). Wyoming is currently the only state in the region without a temple. The two additional temples that have been announced are to be built in Idaho. One will be located in Rexburg, Idaho, and the second will be located in Twin Falls, Idaho. No newspaper articles were available for

\(^7\) Deseret News Church Almanac 2005, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Salt Lake City, Utah, 2004, 207.
either of these two temples at the time this work was published; therefore, neither was included in the study.  

**Montana**

Even though the history of the Church in Montana did not begin as early as the rest of the states in the region, three things—distances from other temples, remoteness due to travel routes, and membership growth—set Montana up as a prime candidate for one of the smaller temples. Therefore, Montana’s first temple was placed in Billings, Montana.

*Billings Montana Temple*

The story of this temple as covered by the *Billings Gazette* proved to be a regular western “showdown”. The showdown produced a fourteen-month delay in the approval of the project by public officials. Over twenty-one articles were printed in a three-year period of time.

Within a few weeks of the very first Gazette article announcing the Church’s intent to build a temple in Billings an opposition group named the Rimrocks Task Force formed to oppose the project. Although they constituted the minority, the Rimrocks group attended every public meeting held during the fourteen-month debate, and they opposed almost every detail of the project. They initially complained that the city was already overextended in regard to services like police and fire protection, and said that annexing more land would make things worse.  

Public officials responded that they had already studied those issues and felt they were resolved. Then the Rimrocks group

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8 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints website at http://www.lds.org/templcs/chronological.

explained how displeased they were with the exterior evening lighting of the structure, to which a Church spokesman responded that the Church was willing to turn off the lights by 11:00 p.m. Rimrocks' next complaint was about the exterior color of the temple, and finally, about traffic, as evident in the following quotation:

Temple opponents questioned nearly everything about the traffic studies submitted by the church, and said they failed to measure potential tourist traffic in addition to traffic from those specifically using the temple. One opponent, Bob Waller, said "hundreds, if not thousands" of people, many of them from out of town or out of state have already driven through the neighborhood in recent months just to look at the vacant lot where the temple is proposed to be built.

Even the author of this article thought the Rimrock group's opposition to the temple was a bit much, as he stated, "temple opponents questioned nearly everything about the traffic studies submitted by the church." 

In the first public meeting at which annexation of the land was discussed, in October of 1996, 1,200 people attended. It was the first time in 26 years that a Billings, Montana, public meeting had to move locations to accommodate the crowd. Nearly all of the 1,200 people in the audience were in favor of the temple; the Rimrocks group represented only "a small pocket" of people in attendance. To the surprise of nearly everyone present the public officials voted 6-5 against annexing the land on grounds that the Church had not prepared enough information to answer questions raised by the Rimrocks group or by the public officials themselves. Nevertheless, the wording of the

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12 Ibid.
final motion stipulated that the Church had additional time to prepare the requested information.\textsuperscript{14}

Eight months later—during which time the Church had prepared models, plans, detailed explanations, and sketches—the Church resubmitted their proposal for annexation. At this second public meeting 400 people attended, and this time 68 members of the audience were permitted to speak. Of the 68 people that spoke, 56 were in favor of the temple and 12 were against, and the meeting lasted 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours.\textsuperscript{15} After the hours had passed, the zoning commission barely approved the project by a 3-2 vote. One of the members of the commission in favor of the project said, "I felt the LDS Church had really done its homework."\textsuperscript{16} Another member of the commission, who voted against the project, stated an opposite opinion: "On the crucial issues the church simply wasn't able to state specifically what those impacts would be."\textsuperscript{17}

One month later, having passed the five member commission board, the project was brought before a full eleven-member public board once again. The meeting began at 6:30 p.m., and after four hours of hearing and assessing "reports from city staff and statements from official spokesmen for both sides in the debate," the podium was finally offered to the public. This time, 800 people attended the meeting, and despite the sweltering heat of the non-air-conditioned building, 152 people stepped to the lectern and presented their opinions before the public officials. One city engineer tallied "104 in favor of the temple and 47 against, with one man undetermined."\textsuperscript{18} One council member:

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ed Kemmick, "Temple talkers kept it going until 4 a.m.," \textit{Billings Gazette}, Aug. 28 1997, Section A12.
stated, “It was almost punitive, especially at the end when people knew we were almost
dead and just kept on talking.” And punitive it was, the meeting lasted 9 ½ hours, from
6:30 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. Most council members stayed awake through the proceeding, but
some nodded off for hours at a time. In the end, it looked like three of the public officials
had been swayed to vote for approval of the project, but the final vote was delayed until
another meeting.

A month later, the public officials finally agreed to annex the land by an 8-3 vote.
The article reported that if the city had denied the annexation the Church would have
taken the issue to court. Although the land was annexed there was yet some substantial
approvals needed from the public officials. A few weeks later, when the project was
voted on for a final time, the public officials placed numerous conditions on the project.
The conditions were as follows:

Restrictions approved by the council will require the church to shut off
lights illuminating the temple by 10:30 p.m. each night, and the lights are
not to exceed an average of five foot-candles. . . . They mandated the
completion of a traffic accessibility study, required the church to abide by
its landscaping plans, and limited the church to two monument signs and
one wall sign on the site. Additionally, cut-off lighting was to be used on
the temple and the parking lot to keep light from shining on any
neighboring property.

The Church willingly agreed to each of the conditions and the public officials finally
approved the project 10-1.

The following is a break down of the scoring of each of the Billings Gazette
articles:

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19 Ed Kemmick, "Temple talkers kept it going until 4 a.m.,” Billings Gazette, Aug. 28 1997,
Section A12.
As seen above, the first article was a typical announcement article, but many articles filled with negative statements followed. After the groundbreaking article was printed, the remaining articles received more favorable scores. However, one anti-Latter-day Saint letter the editor ran in the paper during the open house. This article was written by a disgruntled neighbor who begged readers to “refrain from attending the open house”
because “our neighborhood will be invaded by the unfamiliar.”21 He continued, “if it’s not open to the public at any other time, why reinforce that mentality by attending” at all.22 Well, this neighbor’s pleas went unheeded as 68,453 attended the two-week open house. To publicize the open house, the Church printed a full sixteen-page color insert, which ran in the Sunday edition of the Billings Gazette the weekend the open house began. The rest of the articles were very positive in their approach, and the twenty-one articles average a +.52 score.

**Nevada**

The first temple dedicated in Nevada was the Las Vegas Nevada Temple (1989), but the smaller temple concept opened the way for a second temple to be built in another populated area of the state—Reno. Because of the desert terrain that separates the two cities, no major highways or freeways run directly between Las Vegas and Reno. Hence, isolated Saints in Reno benefited from the smaller temple location.

**Reno Nevada Temple**

The *Reno Gazette-Journal*’s first article’s headline already spoke of trouble: “Homeowners Oppose Mormon Temple.”23 Residents in the surrounding neighborhoods were extremely upset because they had been told by the neighborhood builder that nothing would be built on the lot where the temple was to be located. In fact, some of the residents paid extra to have their homes built by the vacant lot so that they would have a clear view of the city from their hillside neighborhood. One resident explained that “she and her husband paid extra for their lot and were told that the land adjacent to their home

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22 Ibid.
would not be developed.” Some residents paid as much as an additional $40,000 for such lots. Another frustrated neighbor pointed out, “It seems for someone to collect tens of thousands of dollars from homeowners and then (allow construction of) something that will block those views is unfair.” More then half of the article covered the reaction of these neighbors.

Then the article took an unusual turn. The source for the Church’s response in the article asked to remain anonymous because he or she was not supposed “to make public statements about the yet-to-be-formally-announced project.” In all of the articles reviewed for this work this was the only instance in which the Church’s spokesperson asked to remain anonymous. Despite this, the spokesperson went on to explain that the purposed temple should not obstruct the homeowner’s views and was a better alternative to the property’s multi-family zoning. The temple would be 500 feet away from the nearest home, and “once they (the neighbors) see what it does for the neighborhood, they will come to appreciate its enhancement to the community.” These statements mentioned nothing about the developer, but rather assured readers that the structure would not hinder the neighborhood’s view. Interestingly, this article was accompanied with an artist’s drawing of the “yet-to-be-formally-announced” Reno Temple in an attempt to show that the temple was not designed to be extremely high. This artist’s rendition of the proposed temple was placed in a side by side comparison with a picture of the Las Vegas temple, which is much larger in size. In summary, this article’s

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
sources were primarily angry neighbors, which all received a -1 score, and the only Church source would not identify him or herself. Therefore, instead of the normal +1 score the Church sources receive, this source received a 0 or neutral score. Hence, this first article scored -.80.

The second article about the temple was only seven sentences long. The first five sentences "officially" announced the project and its location, and then a local stake president explained, "Temples are considered the most sacred buildings in the Church. They are used for family-centered ordinances such as baptisms and marriages. LDS members believe that family relationships continue forever because of the ordinances." The final sentences of the article once again touched upon the opposition, "The proposal had brought protests from some neighbors, who bought homes for $200,000 and more in part because of the view. Current plans call for a 75-foot lighted spire with a golden angel statue on top." In all, this article scored a +.33.

A month later, following the Reno planning commission meeting, a third article was printed reporting on the meeting. This time the major objection to the project was the bright nighttime lighting of the structure. People from both sides of the argument were present, but those in favor of the project and its nighttime lighting out numbered those opposed to the project two to one. At the end of the meeting, the planning commission motioned to approve the temple, with the following stipulations: (1) limit parking lot lights after 10:00 pm, (2) ensure that light does not spill over into neighboring properties, and, (3) review the lighting issue six months after an occupancy permit was issued.

30 Ibid.
31 Robert Anglen, "Reno residents see the light, say now temple will be too bright," Reno Gazette-Journal, May 21, 1999, Section D1.
issued to handle complaints. The neighbors were very upset, and complained that they had been “deceived” into believing that nighttime lighting would be lowered at 9:30 p.m. Because no such proposal was raised during the meeting, the angry neighbors promised to appeal the planning commission’s decision.\textsuperscript{32} The majority of this article quoted from the opposing side, and the article received a -.22 score.

The appeal process generated three more articles. The fourth overall article recapped the position of both sides of the conflict. A local stake president reasoned, “There are no restrictions on lights on any other church in the city . . . we want to be held to the same standards.”\textsuperscript{33} However, the neighbors countered, “All we want is for the lights to be turned off at night so that we can see our dark starlit skies.”\textsuperscript{34} In their rebuttal statements, the stake president said, “We plan to be the best neighbors, but we hope they can learn to live with [the lights].”\textsuperscript{35} To which a neighbor responded, “This appeal was the only way to get their attention. They keep saying they want to be good neighbors . . . they need to show it.”\textsuperscript{36} These quotes show the opposition between the two groups, and their statements countered each other all throughout the article. It received a 0 score.

The fifth article was a letter to the editor written on the day that public officials met to review the appeal. The author listed many reasons that the temple should be approved and explained what the Church planned to do to alleviate the lighting concerns. It listed the Church’s intent to plant 200 mature trees and additional hedges to serve as a natural barrier between the homes and temple. Also, it stated that the temple site was

\textsuperscript{32} Robert Anglen, “Reno residents see the light, say now temple will be too bright,” \textit{Reno Gazette-Journal}, May 21, 1999, Section D1.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
lower in elevation than the homes, naturally shielding them from the lights. This article received a +1.0 score.

The sixth article stated that the public officials approved the project, with one additional stipulation. A manual dimmer switch to all the outside lighting was to be installed, and following the six month trial period with the lighting at full capacity, the situation would be reviewed to determine whether the lights needed to be dimmed. From the comments in the paper, both sides appeared satisfied by this arrangement, and these positive comments helped the article to score a +1.33.

The remaining five articles are as follows. A brief article containing pictures covered the installation of the angel Moroni atop the steeple. This article scored a +1.0 because of the favorable content and the jubilant statements from the local members. The next article followed the media’s open house visit. This article received front-page exposure in the Gazette-Journal, and contained many positive comments from local ministers and neighbors near the temple. One neighbor explained, “I don’t think it’s obtrusive at all. I’ve seen it with lights turned on and it doesn’t detract from anything. In fact, it’s very pretty, and I don’t know what these people were complaining about.” A local minister stated, “I’m pleased for my Mormon friends, and pleased we have this sacred building in our city.” To which his wife added, “I was particularly inspired by the focus on family values. I was taken and moved by that, by the importance of keeping

41 Ibid.
the family together. It made me come away really feeling good.” With positive comments like this, the article scored a +1.44.

The next two articles related information concerning the success of the temple’s open house and advertised that the temple was the “hottest attraction” in Reno, as some 38,000 people toured the building. These articles scored a +.80 and a +1.0 respectively. The final article was just a little blurb informing readers that the dedication had taken place, and that the temple was now closed to the public. This article scored a +1.0.

In total, the Reno Gazette-Journal printed eleven articles concerning the temple. Here is chart showing how the eleven articles scored:

The average score for the eleven Reno Gazette-Journal articles was +.63.

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Arizona

Arizona was the first state in this region to have a temple dedicated, in 1927. Eighteen years past before another temple was built in the region. Initially, Church authorities promised the early Arizona Saints in the Snowflake/Taylor area and in the Stafford/Thatcher/Pima area that their communities would one day receive temples. The Mesa Arizona Temple in part fulfilled this promise, but Mesa was not one of the initial settlements. Many of the Saints hailing from these original settlements still hoped that their communities would one day receive a temple, and once again, the smaller temple concept opened the way for these promises to be fulfilled.

Snowflake Arizona Temple

The most widely circulated newspaper in Arizona is the Arizona Republic, and this paper printed all the articles concerning the Snowflake Temple with the exception of one additional article printed in the Los Angeles Times. The Republic first ran an article on the morning of the groundbreaking ceremony. The article quickly pointed out that Snowflake public officials and the surrounding towns were pleased with the project, "There's nothing but encouraging words about the LDS Church's decision to build a temple in this area of Snowflake and its neighboring town of Taylor, where about two-thirds of the population are Mormons." In addition to the solid support from the community, the lifelong Latter-day Saint residents had expected a temple for years. One long time resident explained, "The early settlers were led to believe that a temple would be built [here] because of their sacrifices in coming to this harsh, isolated area." Then

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46 Ibid.
the article ended with a brief historical explanation of the Latter-day Saint beginnings in the area.

A second article was printed nine months later when the angel Moroni was placed atop the temple. The author of this article explained its importance:

The Moroni statue is 8 ½ feet tall and made of Fiberglass covered in 24-karat gold leaf. Moroni is depicted with a trumpet to his lips, symbolizing the restoration of Jesus Christ’s Church to earth. According to church teachings, Moroni was a prophet of God in the Americas. As a resurrected being, he returned to earth and revealed the Book of Mormon to church founder and prophet Joseph Smith. Most temples have Moroni on their spires. 47

After explaining why 200 people would take such interest in the placing of a steeple, the author then turned to an explanation of the uses of the temple and the worldwide growth of the Church.

Six months later, a short, front-page article informed the public of phone numbers and an internet address at which readers could order tickets for the temple’s open house. Open house dates and times and dedication dates and times were published as well. 48 A media day article followed, explaining that more than 60,000 tickets had been reserved for the open house, and an additional 40,000 people were expected to take the tour. The remainder of the article related elaborate details of the building’s interior. 49 Chronologically, the day following this previous article, the Los Angeles Times ran a short announcement about the dates, times, and length of the Snowflake Temple open house. 50

49 Ibid.
The final article in the *Arizona Republic* was the only negative article mentioning the Snowflake Temple. Ironically, the article really did not have much to do with the temple itself. During the same period of time as the Snowflake Temple open house, the Arizona state legislature experienced a $250 million budget deficit. Therefore, when the Governor and the state's Speaker of the House, each used a "Department of Public Safety plane, which costs $526 an hour to operate"51 to fly to Snowflake to attend the open house, the reporter questioned whether this was a wise and necessary use of public funds, considering the state's financial status. The article itself was not directly negative toward the temple or the Church, but because the public officials were attending the temple open house, the publicity was slightly negative.

Overall, six articles were printed concerning the Snowflake Temple and all of them received a +1.0 score except for the final article, which received a -.01 score. Here is a summary of the articles with their scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snowflake Arizona Temple Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groundbreaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all, the six articles averaged to a +.82 score.

**Mountain West Region Summary**

Opposition from neighbors hampered the progress of two of the temples in the region—the Billings Montana Temple, and the Reno Nevada Temple. In fact, many of

the arguments that the neighbors raised were similar to those raised by the neighbors of three of the California Temples discussed in Chapter 2.

As evident in the articles, the Church tried to work closely with neighborhoods located near proposed temple sites. Many newspapers reported that neighborhood meetings were held, at which Church representatives discussed the details of the projects and tried to answer the neighbors’ questions. Despite these efforts, some neighbors still remain unpleased, as shown in the following excerpt from the *Reno Gazette-Journal*:

“Castle Rock subdivision residents said they were ‘deceived’ by church officials who told them in neighborhood meetings they would agree to lower light levels.”

There may never be a solution to appease every neighbor.

One can observe, however, a correlation between the amount of opposition raised by the public officials and disgruntled neighbors, and the length of the time the project is delayed. The newspaper reporting in this region showed this correlation fairly well. First, in Billings, Montana, at the initial city planning meeting, 1200 people attended and the majority of them supported the temple. Despite this overwhelming support, public officials denied annexation at that time. Those members who voted against the project wanted to validate the concerns of the disgruntled neighbors before approving the project. In one of the *Billings Gazette* articles, a public official explained, “I’m going to look at it as a vote to delay.”

This article went on to explain that, traditionally, this board had not denied annexation requests, and therefore, another member of the board asked for “clarification of the point that a ‘no’ vote would still give the church plenty of time to

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52 Robert Anglen, “Reno residents see the light, say new temple will be too bright,” Reno Gazette-Journal, May 21, 1999, Section D1.
resubmit another annexation request.” In other words, those who voted against the temple were trying to appease both sides of the argument.

Public officials trying to appease both sides was also evident in the *Reno Gazette-Journal*’s articles, but the delays in Reno did not last as long and were not as punitive as those in Billings. In Reno, the Church was allowed to follow its initial lighting design for six months on a trial basis, and then the council and community would revisit the topic if a change needed to occur.

On the other hand, the Snowflake Temple hardly experienced any opposition in the predominantly Latter-day Saint community, and the city approval process was much faster when compared to the other two cities.

So what is the connection between the opposition groups and their efforts, the Church, and public officials that determine the length of time a city takes to approve a project? This question can not be fully answered here because more information than just newspaper sources would need to be collected to understand the variables of the answer. But, the newspaper articles’ information does suggest one hypothesis. It seems that the bulk of the power in delaying or furthering a project lies with public officials despite the size or organization level of any opposition group. Therefore, the Church is extremely wise in all of its preliminary efforts to research zoning and voting trends of cities and public officials in cities were temples are desired. In regards to this study all of these efforts on behalf of the Church greatly reduce negative newspaper publicity.

Aside from this observation, the newspaper coverage in the region only received unfavorable scores in five articles. Interestingly, this region’s newspaper coverage did not contain any negative comments from other religious groups; but instead, from

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community opposition groups, and in one instance, negative comments came regarding the Arizona politicians' misuse of state funds. On the other hand, twenty-eight articles were favorable in their coverage of the temples.

In summary, a total of thirty-eight articles were collected for the three temples in this region. The following chart recaps the scoring for each of these temples:

![Mountain West Region's Averages](chart)

As shown above, the averaged scores were fairly consistent in this region, and average regional score was +.66.
Chapter 4
The Southwest Region

Latter-day Saint History in the Region

The four states of Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico make up the Southwest Region. The Latter-day Saint history in this region began in 1841, as New Orleans, Louisiana, became the principal port of arrival for members of the Church traveling from Europe. Some 17,463 Saints migrated to Church centers in the U.S. via New Orleans for fourteen years. A small branch functioned there from 1844 to 1855, when the major port of entry shifted to New York.\(^1\) During the period of the early 1840s, while Louisiana was receiving large groups of Saints, the Prophet Joseph Smith considered Texas as a possible relocation site for a colony of Saints, but these plans were disrupted by his martyrdom.\(^2\)

Following the martyrdom, the Saints migrated west, and when life reached some level of normalcy there, missionary efforts were organized. Because of its Native American population, Oklahoma was of particular interest to early Latter-day Saint missionaries, and from 1855 to 1859, work progressed among the Cherokee Nation. However, the effects of the Civil War ended the Church's labors in this mission field.\(^3\)

\(^3\) Deseret News Church Almanac 2005, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Salt Lake City, Utah, 2004, 224-225.
In 1878, New Mexico was selected as one of the states to colonize. Although this effort began with small settlements, it grew rapidly when Saints in the Mexican colonies needed a quick relocation spot during the Mexican Revolution of 1912. The influx of Saints to this state provided enough leadership and members that a stake was organized in 1912.4

Forty years passed before another stake in the region was organized in Texas, in 1952. Texas was the first state in this region to receive a temple, which was built in Dallas in 1984.5 Louisiana and Oklahoma had stakes organized in 1955 and 1960, respectively. Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico all received temples during 2000, and since then, Texas has received two additional temples: one in Lubbock, which was dedicated in 2002, and another in San Antonio, which is scheduled to be dedicated in May 2005.6

New Mexico

For years, most of the stakes in New Mexico were assigned to the Mesa Arizona Temple district, but when additional temples were built in Denver, Colorado, and in Monticello, Utah, different stakes within the state attended the temple closest and most accessible to them. Then, New Mexico received its first temple, which was dedicated in 2000.

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6 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints website at http://www.lds.org/temples/chronological.
Concerning the Albuquerque New Mexico Temple, nine articles were printed within Albuquerque’s major metropolitan paper, The Albuquerque Journal, and one article appeared in the Houston Chronicle.

The first two Albuquerque Journal articles were printed on the same day. Both of these articles were placed in section A of the paper—one on the front page, and the other on the eighth page. The front-page article quoted solely from Church representatives and explained the temple and the Church in great detail. Here is an excerpt from this article:

Nonmembers might believe that the temple’s interior is a huge hall, similar to a great cathedral, LDS officials said. But temples are made up of many smaller rooms with specific purposes. Besides marriages, rooms are used for baptisms, religious instruction, offices, laundry (for cleaning the white clothing worn in the temple), a cafeteria, waiting areas and changing rooms. . . . The LDS Church is Christian but is neither Catholic nor Protestant. Rather, its members believe it is a restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ as he originally established it. The Church uses the Book of Mormon, considered a divinely inspired scripture, as well as the Bible.\(^7\)

This excerpt shows how closely the reporter rephrased his Latter-day Saint sources. When compared with many of the other announcement articles published throughout the nation, the wording of this article is especially positive and clear. This article scored a +1.0.

The second article, printed the same day as the first and also written by the same author, was entitled, “Plans Draw Mixed Reaction From Neighboring Pastors.”\(^8\) This time, as the headline suggested, the reporter quoted different pastors’ reactions to the temple. One reverend from a Lutheran church stated, “My initial thought is surely we

have some very serious and tremendous theological differences with the Mormons.” This statement was immediately followed by a Presbyterian pastor, who reasoned, “(The temple) doesn’t bother me. We certainly don’t deal with the same target audience, I’d guess you’d say.” Without any further explanation from these gentlemen, the remainder of the article focused on how positive the neighbors in Orlando, Florida, have felt about a temple in their neighborhood. This portion of the article read:

The LDS Church hired an independent research organization to do a study in December of 117 homes surrounding the Orlando Florida Temple, which opened in 1994. The study found:

- 91 percent of the residents said the temple favorably affected the value of their homes.
- 92 percent said they would purchase a home again in the area.
- 85 percent said they saw no negative influence on the traffic.
- 100 percent said there was no negative influence on the noise level in the neighborhood.
- 73 percent said they preferred the temple over a single housing development.

Bill Sego, a church official [in Albuquerque], said the temple won’t be a proselytizing center or a missionary training center. Despite the title of the article, this article focused less on the critical reaction of local pastors, and more on explaining why the temple will benefit the surrounding community. This article scored a +.92.

Three days following these previous articles, a letter to the editor was printed which reiterated many of the same facts from the two previous articles. This letter received a +1.0 score.

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The next article followed the county zoning meeting, at which two neighbors to the temple shared concerns about landscaping, the height of the steeple, and the lighting of the building at night. The Church’s spokesman took each of the concerns voiced and explained what was planned to either limit or eliminate the concerns raised. After both sides had had a chance to speak, the zoning board voted to approve the project with the following stipulations: 1) the landscaping must use trees, plants, and vegetation native to the area; 2) the neighbors and the Church were to reach an agreement as to the height of the steeple; and 3) the lighting of the building must conform to the already established exterior lighting ordinances set for the area. Following the ruling, the Church spokesman said, “We feel comfortable with the conditions that have been defined. They are issues we’ve already discussed with the neighborhood association. We’re confident that by working with the neighbors and the county staff we’ll be able to address all those conditions in a positive way.” One neighbor stated that he was satisfied with the ruling, but a second neighbor said that he would share the outcome with his association and from there determine if they would appeal the ruling. Although everything worked out in the end, this article received a -.09 score due to the majority of the article’s focusing on the conflict before the agreements were made.

Chronologically, the next article was printed in the Houston Chronicle. This brief article informed readers that Church growth in New Mexico was sufficient to merit a temple in Albuquerque. The article went on to discuss how large the building was and when it would be completed. It scored a +1.0.

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The next article, printed in the *Albuquerque Journal*, highlighted the construction plans following the groundbreaking of the site. This article focused on three topics: 1) the high quality of the materials planned to be used in the building, 2) the need for a temple because of the Church’s growth in the state, and 3) the long distances to the nearest temples. As directed by public officials, the neighbors and the Church worked out many issues and details of the project together. There were still a few details to agree upon, but they didn’t stop the groundbreaking from taking place. One portion of the article explained, “Church and association officials praised each other as open and cooperative, but association officials were still concerned about the height of the temple’s spire.”13 The article ended by informing the public that there would be a three-week open house before the temple was dedicated.14 This article scored a +.86.

A year after the groundbreaking ceremony, another article also discussed the growth of the Church in the state, and how the temple was the greatest symbol of this growth. Within the article, two University of New Mexico history professors who had co-authored a book entitled, *Religion in Modern New Mexico*, touted the Church as one of the few churches that has remained “conservative, and yet has grown.”15 To further highlight the Church’s growth, the article recounted the Latter-day Saint history in the state from the Mormon Battalion’s organization to the present time. It ended with the story of a recent convert to the Church, explaining why he had joined the Church.16 This article received a +1.1 score.

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14 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
Eight months later, another headline read, "Mormon Temple Debuts." This media day article contained a detailed description of the temple's interior, a step-by-step explanation of what was to be expected during a tour, and a few doctrinal statements about Church beliefs and temple work. This article scored a +1.33.

The next article enticed readers by initially stating that "more than 47,000 people" had toured the temple during its first week of the public open house, and that there was still another week to attend. Then, the article quoted Church members and non-members' reactions to the tour. All of the statements were positive. For example, one non-member said, "We came to see what other religions have. We're originally from Washington D.C., where they have a beautiful temple. We wanted to see the inside of this temple." Again, the Latter-day Saint and non-Latter-day Saint sources quoted were positive in their statements; therefore, this article received a +1.64 score.

The final article covered the dedication of the temple. As seen in many articles throughout the United States, this author chose to quote extensively from President Hinckley’s interaction with the audience during the cornerstone ceremony. Readers were also informed that a grand total of 73,000 people had toured the temple during the open house. This article scored a +1.0 score.

In all, ten articles were collected from the Albuquerque New Mexico Temple. The following chart reviews how the articles scored:

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19 Ibid.

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The newspaper coverage of the Albuquerque New Mexico Temple began as many of temples did in the previous two regions reviewed—with neighbors opposing the temple. But, unlike the temples in those regions, once compromises were reached in Albuquerque, the neighbors, for the most part, accepted the agreements, and relations were mended. One article in Albuquerque explained that the neighbors and Church actually “praised each other” on their working together. This positive community feedback continued during the open house articles as the non-members only commented favorably toward the Church and temple. The average score for the Albuquerque Temple’s coverage was +.98.

**Oklahoma**

Due to their long tradition of religious practice, the states of Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana are part of the nation commonly called the Bible Belt. Latter-day Saints have in recent years experienced significant growth in the Bible Belt region, Oklahoma...
included. Before the Oklahoma City Temple was built, the Saints in Oklahoma traveled to Dallas, Texas, to attend the closest temple. However, in 2000, the state had its first temple dedicated.

**Oklahoma City Oklahoma Temple**

Of the temples in the Southwest Region, the Oklahoma City Oklahoma Temple received the most publicity. The major metropolitan paper for Oklahoma City is *The Oklahoman*, and seventeen articles on the temple appeared in this paper over a 28-month period of time. As seen with other temples in this study, large numbers of articles in a newspaper generally imply opposition. The Oklahoma City Oklahoma Temple’s opposition came primarily from Christian groups that declared that “Mormonism” leads people away from Christ. Ministers and the congregations of the Southern Baptist Church and the Church of Christ in Quail Springs, Oklahoma (a suburb of Oklahoma City) joined together to “prepare” the community for the temple. The two congregations paid for public anti-“Mormon” presentations, paid to published their own anti-“Mormon” rhetoric in the newspaper, organized the distribution of thousands of anti-“Mormon” pamphlets during the temple’s open house, and created such a stir that four of the seventeen articles *The Oklahoman* ran covered their efforts, and the Latter-day Saint reaction to their work.

Interestingly, in the announcement article, one of the Latter-day Saint sources was a temple department employee working in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was quoted as saying, “I see no reason to expect opposition from other Churches in Oklahoma.” and then the reporter added that this source had only “spent three months in Oklahoma City

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while attending a business training course."23 A reader could almost hear the reporter’s chuckle in the naiveté of the non-Oklahoman’s comment.

The first article that *The Oklahoman* ran covering the opposition efforts of these churches was full of inciting comments toward the Church, such as, “They are as lost as they come,”24 “Joseph Smith was a ‘huckster,’”25 and, “If you have not seen the missionaries beating down your door, you will. When this temple opens in a few months, there will be five or six hundred Mormon missionaries brought from all over the country to be here in Oklahoma City to saturate this community.”26 Ironically, this article and the others that followed prompted many non-members to defend the Church.

One non-Latter-day Saint letter to the editor countered:

I am a Baptist; ironically, a member of Surrey Hills Baptist Church located about 300 yards from the site of the new Mormon Temple. In one breath, [the antagonists] deny ‘Mormon-bashing,’ yet later [they] refer to Joseph Smith, their founder, as a ‘huckster.’ [These anti-Mormon religious leaders] should remember that the only name-calling Jesus did was in reference to religious leaders. If we are concerned with the spiritual well-being of our Mormon neighbors, I strongly suspect that opening dialog with attack and derision will not be terribly effective.... I think what [the antagonists] are most concerned with is the commitment Mormon people have to their beliefs. Perhaps we should emulate, not fear, that commitment.27

In another article, written by *The Oklahoman*’s primary religious editor after more anti-“Mormon” articles had been printed, the author stated that the majority of the people calling or e-mailing in opposition to the negative articles were not Latter-day Saints

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25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Mike Ibison, “Commitment Admirable,” *The Oklahoman*, Feb. 21, 2000, in the Letters to the Editor Section.
themselves, and they were interested to know when the temple's open house was taking place.\(^\text{28}\)

In a few articles, reporters sought out the local stake president's rebuttal to all the negative publicity:

No missionaries will be added to the area. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons as we are commonly called, are Christians, and we invite everyone, through prayer through study and through acquaintance with members of the faith, to understand the faith and its center with the Savior. The Mormons believe in family, and that is why temples are built, so that families can be together forever. As for the specific allegations made, we believe it would be un-Christian to comment other than to say that Jesus Christ is the center of our church, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that missionaries go out for two years, supporting themselves, and explain to everyone willing to hear the message of Jesus Christ.\(^\text{29}\)

Despite the anti-“Mormon” opposition toward the Oklahoma City Temple, it seems that it only created more public interest in the temple than would have been generated otherwise.

In summary, the seventeen articles and their scores were as follows:

\[\text{Diagram of bar charts showing scores for different events.}\]


Of the six temples studied in the Southwest region, the Oklahoma City Temple received the highest number of unfavorable scores: three. Interestingly, of the states in this region that are in the Bible Belt – Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma – Oklahoma was the only one to have serious religious opposition.

Despite this unfavorable publicity, there were non-members who defended the Church. As well, there were many more articles that were favorable in their focus and sources. These positive articles overpowered the negative, and the Oklahoma Temple ended up with a +.61 average.

Texas

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Texas was the first state in the Southwest region to receive a temple. It was dedicated in 1984 in Dallas, Texas. During the period of this study (1997-2004), the state received two additional temples—one in Houston, and another in Lubbock. A third will be dedicated in San Antonio in May, 2005.

Houston Texas Temple

The city of Houston is the largest metropolitan area in this region, and over a seven-year period, thirteen articles relating information about various Latter-day Saint temples appeared in The Houston Chronicle. Seven of the articles related to the building
of the Houston Temple itself, one article highlighted a visit by President Hinckley to Houston, and the remainder of the articles covered other temples in the nation. These last articles about temples other than the temple in Houston, will be discussed with each respective temple. In addition to the seven Chronicle articles, another article about the Houston Temple was printed in the Lubbock, Texas newspaper, the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal.

Unlike the publicity surrounding the Albuquerque Temple and the Oklahoma City Temple, the Houston Chronicle articles contained neither neighbor nor religious opposition. Rather, these groups provided extremely positive statements toward the Church.

Explaining the Church's desire to ease any potential opposition, the announcement article reported, "Seeking local support before construction begins, Mormon officials plan to meet with civic groups and leaders of other Churches. During the next two days, Mormons will hand deliver 2,200 information packets to Spring area homes. Their outreach is to answer frequent questions, including what goes on inside a temple, and how it affects traffic, property values and noise levels."30 This article also quoted from Jan Shipps, the non-Latter-day Saint religion expert from Indiana, who, once again, was favorable in her statements, and the rest of the article was typical in the information provided. It scored a +1.08.

The next article's headline read, "Mormons On The Move/ New President Adept With Media And General Public." The bulk of this article quoted President Hinckley on such topics as the Monica Lewinsky matter, the growth of the Church and President

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Hinckley's travels worldwide, polygamy, women and the priesthood, and Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. In addition, the reporter quoted from one anti-"Mormon" critic, but then countered with quotes from Jan Shipps and Rodney Stark (another non-Latter-day Saint and a University of Washington sociologist who predicted great future growth for the Church). All of these sources and topics resulted in a final +.80 score.

The third article scored a +1.0. It only contained a picture and a one-sentence caption about the angel Moroni being placed atop the temple.

The fourth article was about a conglomerate of religious denominations building edifices of worship in the Houston area. For the author to include the Church and the temple in an article about the community's religious groups showed an overall acceptance and approval of the temple locally. This positive publicity scored a +1.5.

The fifth article chronicled the media day tour of the temple, and once again another author was extremely favorable in his description of the temple's interior and of the tour as a whole. The author elaborately described the chandeliers, decorations, master trim work, carpet, etc. Because of the author's positive comments, this article scored a +1.23.

The next article appeared in the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal. It highlighted the fact that the Houston Temple was the second in the state to be dedicated, explained the uses of Latter-day Saint temples, and then gave a few specifics about the Houston Temple. Interestingly, six months prior to this article, President Hinckley had announced that a temple would be built in Lubbock, so an article like this was of particular interest to a community preparing to receive a temple as well. This article scored a +1.0.
The sixth article received the second highest score of the seven Houston Chronicle articles. This open house article quoted numerous non-member neighbors, many of whom said that the Church's preconstruction neighborhood meetings and other community efforts were successful. Part of the article explained:

'We knew from the beginning that we were going to have to be very open and accommodating in sharing information about the temple. We held a number of neighborhood meetings early on and several over the last three weeks,' said Al Haines, president of the Church's Cypress Texas Stake. 'We even gave a private preview to the surrounding neighbors before opening up to the general public.' The neighborhood meetings were held in the homes of church members in the Champion Forest subdivision where the temple is located. During those meetings Haines said issues such as traffic flow, the general aesthetics of the building and the temple's effects on the home values were discussed. 'It is an absolute beautiful facility,' said Jeannette Loverdi, a resident of the Champion Forest subdivision. 'I have actually been on the tour twice and attended a home preview meeting. I appreciated their openness about what is going to be a part of our neighborhood and community.' Peggy Jo Coker, who is also a resident of the Champion Forest Subdivision, thought the church's efforts to reach out to the community helped ease some of the concerns residents had about the building. 'I was quite surprised when I initially learned that the temple would be built here, and I had heard that it wasn't like a traditional church, so I was interested to find out what exactly it was,' Coker said. 'The information night at our neighbor's gave us a preview of what the temple would be like. I think it was extremely smart of them to keep everyone informed.'

Comments like this about the Church and the temple from a non-member rarely stand alone in a newspaper without some comment from another point of view, but this was not so in any of the Chronicle's articles. This particular article scored +1.43.

The final article covered the dedication of the temple. It mostly focused on the cornerstone ceremony and listed each item placed in the airtight box placed in the cornerstone. This author was also positive in her comments about the ceremony and the Church. This article scored a +1.11.

In summary, there were eight articles printed in relation to the Houston Temple. Like the Albuquerque Temple, the newspaper reported that the Church had established such a positive rapport with the neighbors that, when all was said and done, these neighbors were some of the temple's biggest supporters. No other temple in the region enjoyed such glowing reports. In fact, five of the eight articles received higher than a +1.0 score. Here is a breakdown of the article's scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Houston Texas Temple Articles</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall average was +1.14 score.

**Lubbock Texas Temple**

Lubbock, Texas is a much smaller city than any of the three cities previously discussed. Even the local newspaper—*The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*—has a smaller-city feel to it. For example, when the Lubbock Stake changed presidencies in December of 2000 the *Avalanche-Journal* printed a picture of the new stake presidency and a brief biography of the three men.\(^{32}\) It would be very unlikely that such an article would be printed in Houston, Oklahoma City, or Albuquerque. If a stake presidency change was newsworthy for the *Avalanche-Journal*, just imagine the stir a temple caused.

The first article collected from the *Avalanche-Journal* was written before the Temple in Lubbock was announced, but this article showed up in a search for “Mormon

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Temples” on line because it discussed the Church and its other temples. The author of this article was the Avalanche’s religious editor, and she got a large portion of her information about the Church from two secular sources. One source was Craig Blomberg, a New Testament professor at Denver Seminary. She quoted from Blomberg’s convention speech on “Understanding Mormonism,” and from his book entitled “How Wide the Divide?” co-written with Stephen Robinson (a Latter-day Saint). The second source was James R. White, who directs ministries at the Grand Canyon University in Arizona. The reporter likewise quoted from Mr. White’s recently released book, “Is the Mormon my Brother?” Using these two sources, the article reported what these theologians were saying about the Church, and what the local stake president said in response. The problem with this approach was the focus on difficult topics, like the Church’s belief in attaining godhood, which isn’t easy to tackle in a newspaper article. But, in the end, the author allowed the stake president a decent amount of space in the article to explain the Latter-day Saint point of view. This article scored a +.24.

The next four articles were an announcement article, a temple design article, a change in stake presidency article, and an announcement of the open house times and dates article. Each of these articles quoted solely from Latter-day Saint sources, reported typical information, and received a +1.0 score.

The sixth article followed the media day and contained numerous color photos of a sealing room, celestial room, baptismal font, and brides’ room. In addition to many quotes from Church sources, this article also contained many positive comments from the reporter herself. This article scored a +1.07.
The final two articles each scored a +1.0, and they covered the dedication of the temple in typical fashion. With eight articles printed in all, the Lubbock Texas Temple articles were as follows:

As seen above, aside from the first article printed, the Lubbock Temple received favorable newspaper coverage. Remembering that the first article was printed before the Lubbock Temple was announced, it looks like, once announced, the citizens and the reporters of Lubbock readily accepted the temple as part of their community. These eight articles averaged a +.91 score.

San Antonio Texas Temple

Of the three Texas temples included in this study, the San Antonio Texas Temple received the least amount of coverage. There have only been three articles written thus far in San Antonio's local paper—the San Antonio Express-News—and the most comprehensive article about this temple was printed in the Houston Chronicle.

There were two announcement articles, one in the Express-News, and the other in the Chronicle. Both of these articles quoted from Church sources in San Antonio, but as mentioned before, the Chronicle article offered more information about the temple itself and the growth of the Church in the San Antonio area.
The third article, printed almost two years after the announcement article, ran in the *Express-News*. This article ran in conjunction with the temple’s groundbreaking and was practically a rerun of the previous articles.

The last article printed was placed in the community brief and explained the placing of angel Moroni on top of the steeple. All of these articles scored a +1.0.

In conclusion, the four articles for the San Antonio Texas Temple have averaged a +1.0 score, as shown below:

![San Antonio Texas Temple Articles](image)

Similar to the publicity surrounding the Lubbock Texas Temple, the San Antonio Temple newspaper coverage reported neither religious nor community opposition to the temple. In spite of the almost two-year lapse between the announcement and groundbreaking articles, the sources and content were favorable toward the temple.

**Louisiana**

Having played such a major role in the early period of the Church, Louisiana received a temple in 2000. As with New Mexico and Oklahoma, it was the state’s first temple.
Baton Rouge Louisiana Temple

Of all the temples in this study nationwide, the Baton Rouge Louisiana Temple received the least amount of coverage. Only one article appeared in the Baton Rouge Advocate. This article happened to coincide with the media day visit of the open house. The article contained pictures of the baptismal font, the Celestial room, and an ordinance room. Located on the first page of section F of the paper, this article gave the necessary information about the open house. Then, the reporter explained the uses of the various rooms that she viewed while touring the temple, and gave an overview of the temple’s announcement and groundbreaking dates. This article received a +1.33 score.

Southwest Region Summary

A total of forty-eight articles appeared in various newspapers about the six temples built in the Southwest region. Each of these temples averaged the following scores:
Three of the forty-eight articles received an unfavorable score, and one article received a very low score. The opposition in this region came from two sources. The most difficult opposition grew against the Oklahoma City Temple from other religious groups. Although religious opposition was experienced with the Spokane Washington Temple and Medford Oregon Temple, the Oklahoma City Temple’s religious opposition was more publicized and more consistent. Despite this, two extremely positive articles resulted from the opposition’s efforts as non-Latter-day Saints defended the Church in the newspaper. Another kind of opposition came from the neighbors near the Albuquerque New Mexico Temple, but concerns were quickly resolved and relations were dramatically improved.

Also in this region, the newspaper coverage of the Albuquerque and the Houston Temples was unique in that the Church’s efforts in working with the neighbors were extensively reported, and in both instances reactions were extremely positive in the papers. Seven of the eleven articles which scored higher than +1.0 came from the coverage of these two temples.

Knowing that the Church provides similar community efforts and neighborhood meetings throughout the nation it was surprising that more newspapers don’t refer to
these efforts in their articles. With the comments from the non-members being so positive, this region averaged a +1.0 score.
Chapter 5

The Midwest Region

Latter-day Saint History in the Region

The story behind the Midwest Region is really the story of the establishment and early growth of the Church. Three of the states in this region—Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois—each played critical roles in the Church's early history. In addition to these three states, the region also includes the states of Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.

Eight months after the Church was organized, Ohio became the first major gathering location, and as the Saints congregated and membership in the state grew, the first temple in the latter days was built and dedicated in Kirtland, Ohio.\(^1\)

Similar efforts to build a temple were made in Independence, Missouri, the second revealed gathering location. However, opposition drove the Saints from their homes into the northern counties of Caldwell and Davies, Missouri. While settling in the northern counties, and shortly after the Kirtland Temple was dedicated, opposition against the Church strengthened in Ohio, and the Ohio Saints left their homes and temple to join the Missouri Saints. Soon after these two bodies of Saints were joined together

\(^1\) Deseret News Church Almanac 2005, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Salt Lake City, Utah, 2004, 222-223.
another temple was planned in Far West, Missouri, but mobs drove the Saints from their homes again, and this time from the state.2

Illinois became the next gathering location, and there the Saints experienced a period of peace. Homes were built and a temple was erected, but over time opposition grew, and the Saints had to abandon all once more.3 Yet, from the Saints’ first gathering effort at Kirtland, Ohio, in 1830, to the migration west in 1846, the roots of the future growth in the Midwest region were established.

In recent years, Church membership began to be re-established in the region by missionary efforts in highly populated areas such as Chicago, Illinois, and Detroit, Michigan, where stakes were organized in 1936 and 1952 respectively. From that point, Church interest turned to repurchasing lands it had once owned in Missouri. Shortly after some of this land was purchased, the mission headquarters for the region was moved from Chicago to Independence, Missouri. The third state in this region to establish a stake was Missouri in 1956.4 Over the next ten years, stakes were dedicated in each of the following states in the region: Ohio 1958, Indiana 1959, Minnesota and Nebraska 1960, Kansas 1962, Wisconsin 1963, and Iowa 1966. South and North Dakota, neither of which have large Latter-day Saint populations, were the final states in the region to receive stakes, in 1973 and 1977 respectively. In fact, North Dakota was the last state in the U.S. to have a stake.5

Prior to President Hinckley’s small temple announcement, this Midwest region had only two temples in operation—the Illinois Chicago Temple (1985), and the Missouri St. Louis Temple (1997). Since then, six additional temples have been built—Columbus Ohio Temple (1999), Bismarck North Dakota Temple (1999), Detroit Michigan Temple (1999), St. Paul Minnesota Temple (2000), Winter Quarters Nebraska Temple (2001), and Nauvoo Illinois Temple (rebuilt 2002).

Ohio

As already mentioned, the first temple in this dispensation was built in Kirtland, Ohio. The Kirtland Temple endowed the Saints with “power from on high,” and its dedication proved to be a time of great spiritual outpouring among the Church members. Now, 161 years after the dedication and abandonment of the Kirtland Temple, Ohio has once again received a dedicated temple: the Columbus Ohio Temple.

Columbus Ohio Temple

While at a conference with 6,800 Saints in Columbus, Ohio, President Hinckley announced that it was time to build a temple in that city. The day following his announcement, the Columbus Dispatch ran a story on the front page of the religion section of the paper which quoted extensively from President Hinckley and from those who were in attendance at the conference. In addition to the announcement that this temple would be built, President Hinckley hinted, “If it’s overworked, we’ll build another.” One of the Church members in attendance at the conference exclaimed, “[The Lord] hears and answers prayers.” It was obvious from the information and quotes

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6 Doctrine and Covenants 38:32.
8 Ibid.
printed in the article that the author had attended the conference, and yet he never expressed his own feelings.

Shortly after the conference and the announcement, the *Los Angeles Times* printed a small article in the religion section of the paper informing the public that a temple was to be built in the Columbus, Ohio area. Because the Columbus Temple was designed to be a smaller temple, the *Dispatch* ran an article which explained the need for smaller temples, and highlighted the Utah Monticello Temple. It also compared the design of the Monticello Temple to what was to come in Columbus.

These first three articles each received a +1.0 score, and the following two articles—one which reported the exact location of the temple site, and another which highlighted the numerous religious buildings under construction in Columbus, also received +1.0 scores. But, when the open house period arrived, the *Dispatch*’s articles began to take a slightly negative approach. The first article’s headline read, “Temple Traffic Is Likely To Jam,”\(^9\) and it informed the public about the open house times and location.

Two other articles were also printed on the same day in the *Dispatch*, and were written by the same author. One of these articles received an unfavorable score because it focused negatively on African Americans and women and the priesthood. The reporter for this article quoted an African American minister who was president of the Payne Theological Seminary, an African Methodist Episcopal school. Initially, this minister lessened the full impact of his comments by stating, “[Mormons] are respected for their

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citizenship and more than respected as good neighbors; they’re very good neighbors.”

Then he went on to explain:

[Mormons] are viewed with skepticism because of their postulation of Joseph Smith as a prophet and having another testament. There’s no indication in the New Testament there would be another testament coming, and as an African-American, I am really skeptical of their view of African-Americans and God. The exclusion of blacks from the priesthood flies in the face of the Bible. It raises questions about the divine inspiration of the doctrine, if part of the doctrine involved exclusion because of race.

The remainder of this article brought up topics such as cremation, tattoos and body piercing, caffeine, and the role of women in the Church. The reporter continued to quote from non-Latter-day Saint sources as experts on Latter-day Saint theology. For example, the article quoted the executive director of the Chicago and Northern Illinois region of the National Conference for Community and Justice, which is an interfaith organization that fights bigotry and racism, as saying, “The role of women in the Mormon leadership is still being developed, as in other religious communities.”

The leaders of this anti-bigotry and racism group, like the president of the Payne Seminary, added one positive comment about the Church, “Their missionary effort is a model of volunteerism.” The article did contain quotes from Latter-day Saint sources, but these quotes were about topics surrounding the temple itself, rather then on topics of theology.

This received a -.18 score.

The second article was more positive than the first, but the author (the same author as the previous article), added a few comments that cast more curiosity than clarity

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13 Ibid.
on the Church. In one place he wrote, "The Columbus Temple will be dedicated Sept. 4, marking a new chapter in the history of Ohio Mormonism and providing local Mormons a chance to demystify their often-misunderstood faith." However, he provided no explanation as to what was mystifying about the Church. Near the end of the article this author interjected, "Common with major construction projects is a topping-off ceremony, during which a pine tree is placed atop a building, according to an ancient tradition intended to ward off evil spirits." He used this statement to explain why the Church placed the angel Moroni atop its temples. Not in any other newspaper article in the nation was such a claim or comment made. Other than these comments from the reporter, the remainder of the article was positive and invited all to attend the open house. This article scored a +.75.

When the dedication of the temple arrived, the same reporter took a roundabout way to inform readers of the dedication. In an article which typically focuses on the event itself, this reporter decided to revisit the topic of blacks and priesthood by telling the story of an African-American family that had joined the Church. This article emphasized the racial aspect of the story so much that the dedication of the temple was lost in it. This article received a −.80 score.

The final newspaper coverage for the Columbus Ohio Temple was simply a picture that showed President Hinckley adding the mortar to the temple's cornerstone and a small caption informing the reader of the temple's dedication. This newspaper exposure scored +1.0.

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15 Ibid.
As seen above, the newspaper coverage began favorably toward the Church and the temple, but then a string of unfavorable articles was printed. Interestingly, all of the articles which received less than a +1.0 score were written by the same author. Most all of the negative comments either came directly from the author himself, or from a source that he had gone to great lengths – even out of the state – to use. Rarely was it this noticeable that a reporter intentionally expressed negativity toward the Church, as was this case. In spite of this, the other articles' scores countered this particular reporter's articles, and the Columbus Temple received a +.74 score.
North Dakota

North Dakota is naturally an isolated, scarcely populated area of the United States. Before a temple was announced in Bismarck, members had to travel long distances in either direction to attend a temple. To the east was the Chicago Illinois Temple, to the southwest was the Denver Colorado Temple; to the west was the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple, and to the northwest was the Cardston Alberta Canada Temple. In any direction it was a long trip, hence the need for a smaller, more local temple.

Bismarck North Dakota Temple

The total newspaper coverage for the Bismarck North Dakota Temple was provided by the Bismarck Tribune. In all, four articles appeared in the Tribune: an announcement article, a pre-groundbreaking article, a ground breaking article, and a media day article. All four of these articles received a +1.0 score or above, and three of the articles were written by the same author. In contrast with the Columbus Dispatch reporter, this reporter had a positive attitude toward the Church and shared a few personal observations that increased the scores. As an example, in the pre-groundbreaking article, the Tribune reporter added a few sentences about how local businesses were benefiting from and helping with the design of the temple. Also, this Tribune reporter elegantly and tastefully described the interior of the temple, which helped the media day article inch above the +1.0 mark.

The scores and topics of the articles are shown on the chart below:
Overall, the Bismarck Temple's newspaper coverage netted a +1.06 score.

**Michigan**

Although Detroit, Michigan, is not isolated, and the Chicago Illinois Temple is accessible from Detroit, membership growth in the area over the past decades has been significant. Therefore, President Hinckley announced a Detroit Michigan Temple, which was dedicated in 1999.

**Detroit Michigan Temple**

The Detroit Michigan Temple received coverage in three newspaper articles, in *The Detroit Free Press*. The first article, printed on the front page of the paper, not only announced the temple, but also contained a detailed doctrinal explanation concerning the functions of temples. This article compared the functions of Latter-day Saint temples to "the ancient Hebrew temple in Jerusalem," especially the "immense baptismal pool, balanced on the backs of 12 stone oxen." This lengthy article emphasized in an extraordinary and appropriate manner the rites of the temple, and the reasons for such rites. The article ended with a Brigham Young University professor explaining, "When we sit down with people who are not part of our faith, we can say to them, 'We know that..."

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18 Ibid.
you deeply love your family and have a desire to have these relationships perpetuated always.' And we can say: 'There are powers connected with our temples that can make that possible for you.' That is extremely appealing to many people.”

Jan Shipps, who has written two books about the Church, added, “These smaller temples are an extremely significant development. It shows that Mormonism has moved from its former understanding of itself as a chosen people with a kingdom in the mountains—to understanding itself as Mormon Christians who are part of a larger worldwide Christian community.” All of this positive information from both member and non-member sources leads to the article scoring a +1.31.

Ten months later, the second article was printed, which coincided with the placement of the angel Moroni atop the steeple. This article contained quotes solely from members of the Church and also featured former Michigan Governor George Romney, which would draw the interest of many local readers. This article scored a +1.0.

The final Free Press article ran during the beginning of the temple’s open house period. Not only did this article inform readers about the open house, but it also quoted clergy who had already attended the open house. Victor Begg, president of the Muslim Unity Center in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, said, “I was impressed. They talked a lot about family, and that’s a common thread between us. Islam builds its whole superstructure around families. And they talk a lot about our life on Earth being part of eternity. That’s one of the most important things for us as Muslims, too, the belief that

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20 Ibid.
this life is just a temporary place for us.” Rabbi Aaron Bergman of the Congregation Beth Abraham Hillel Moses commented, “It was fascinating. Their version of heaven is that we get reunited with our families, and I think that fits into Judaism, too, although I think they have a stricter entrance requirement for heaven than we do. It was really a moving experience to see their temple. I thought it was wonderful of them to open this up to us.” To these comments the reporter added, “That’s exactly the reaction Mormon leaders are hoping to spark during their open house.” With such positive comments coming from all the non-members quoted in the article, it received a high score of +1.67.

Again, all three articles were written by the same author, and this reporter reported favorable information. In review the articles scored the following:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Announcement</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel Moroni</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open House</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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These scores equal a +1.33 average.

**Minnesota**

Well over half of the 26,000 Saints in Minnesota live in the Twin Cities area. Prior to the announcement of the St. Paul Minnesota Temple, the first temple in Minnesota, the nearest temple was over 400 miles away from St. Paul.

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22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
**St. Paul Minnesota Temple**

Once the location for a temple in St. Paul, Minnesota, was chosen, two local newspapers, the *St. Paul Star Tribune* and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, began printing articles about the temple. The *Star Tribune* broke the first story by announcing the temple’s location. The following day, the *Pioneer Press* ran a similar article, except the author of this article also highlighted the Church’s growth. The *Star Tribune* article scored a +1.0, and the *Pioneer Press* article scored higher at +1.16.

A month later, the *Star Tribune*’s second article informed the community about the groundbreaking ceremony. This article contained a brief explanation of the ceremony, the participants, and the ceremony times. It scored a +1.0. Neither paper reported anything about the groundbreaking following the event; in fact, no subsequent articles concerning the temple appeared for more than a year.

*Pioneer Press* was the first to break the long silence. This article followed the media day at the temple. Like most media day articles, this article contained mostly the reporter’s description of the interior of the temple. This particular reporter brought up the expensiveness and the extravagance of the building in more gaudy terms than any other reporter. Despite the author’s subtle concerns over the elaborateness of the temple, the message of the article did come across positively; therefore, the article scored a +1.13.

The *Star Tribune* published the final article about the St. Paul Minnesota Temple, and like the previous *Pioneer Press* article, this one coincided with the media day visit. Unlike the previous article, however, the *Star Tribune* reporter’s explanation of the interior of the temple was more typical in comparison with other papers throughout the nation. In addition to describing the temple and quoting from the open house tour guide,
this article contained lengthy quotations from the *Encyclopedia of Religion*. These quotes brought up both good and controversial topics from the Church’s past, but positive topics heavily outweighed the negative, and the article scored a +.96.

In all, a total of five articles were published between the two newspapers. All five of the articles are reviewed on the chart below:

![St. Paul Minnesota Temple Articles](image)

Overall, the newspaper coverage about the St. Paul Minnesota Temple was favorable and received a +1.05 score.

**Nebraska**

Even before a temple was built in Winter Quarters, Nebraska, it held a significant place in the memories of Utah Latter-day Saints, because in this location their ancestors paid a great sacrifice in carrying the faith to the West. In connection with the bicentennial celebration of the first Latter-day Saint pioneer trek from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake City, Utah, the Church dedicated the Mormon Trail Center at Winter Quarters in 1997. Since that time thousands of members have visited the center and learned about the compelling history. Four years later, a temple was dedicated adjacent to the center.
Winter Quarters Nebraska Temple

The building of the Winter Quarters Temple was announced on the front page of the Omaha World—Herald. A short five months later, the groundbreaking article was printed. From each of these articles, it appeared that the community was extremely willing to work with the Church when approving this temple to be built—not only were the topics in the articles favorable, but a judge also granted the Church permission to relocate some Latter-day Saint pioneer graves to accommodate the temple plans. These efforts showed the willingness of the community in helping this project move forward. Each of these articles received a +1.0 or higher score.

The third article printed by the Omaha World was the media day article, and it was one of the most positive media day articles in this study. The author begins, "Serenity is a word that comes to mind for non-members visiting the new Winter Quarters Temple. . . . Even if there were a Doubting Thomas or two in the stream of visitors Friday, nothing but respect was seen or heard." Following this introduction, a detailed and accurate account of every aspect of the tour was given, explaining the white shoes, the video, and the various rooms and their usage. The author even reported on the refreshments offered at the end of the tour, but the dominant theme throughout the article was the kindness and friendship felt during the tour. This article received an extremely high score for a media day article, a +1.88, due to the reporter's own positive comments that saturated the article.

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The final three articles, which were each only a few sentences long, announced the last day of the open house, reported that more than 61,000 people had toured the temple, and notified that the dedication had taken place. These three articles each scored a +1.0.

Overall, six articles were collected on the Winter Quarters Nebraska Temple, and all six appeared in the *Omaha World–Herald*. The six articles scored as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Announcement</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundbreaking</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Day</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open House #1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open House #2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the coverage for the Winter Quarters Temple was typical, except for the media day which was extremely positive toward the Church. The six scores amounted to a +1.18 average.

**Illinois**

At one time, Nauvoo, Illinois, was referred to as the City of Joseph, after the Prophet Joseph Smith. Some of Joseph Smith's years in Nauvoo represent one of the most peaceful periods in his life, and it was here that the Lord revealed many of the temple ordinances to him. These ordinances were performed in the original Nauvoo Temple prior to the exodus, and although many family members died along the trail, those who survived found hope in the knowledge provided by the temple ordinances.
The story of the rebuilding of the Nauvoo Illinois Temple not only caught the interest of local newspapers, but it also found its way into many of the national papers. Chronologically, the Houston Chronicle printed the first article just one day following President Hinckley's announcement. The focus of this article was a historical synopsis about the original temple, and it ended with information about the funding and current plans for the temple. Two weeks later, the Los Angeles Times reprinted the Houston Chronicle article, adjusting it only in the reordering of a few paragraphs. These nearly identical articles received the same score, a +1.0.

Another article was printed in Memphis, Tennessee’s major newspaper, The Commercial Appeal. This article covered the temple announcement, background history, Latter-day Saint reaction, and the Nauvoo city clerk’s reaction to the announcement. For the most part, the article was positive, but it focused on the Church’s past with polygamy, and recorded the Nauvoo city clerk and residents having mixed reactions to the announcement. This article scored a +.65.

Interestingly, two years passed before another article about the Nauvoo Temple surfaced. It was printed in a local Iowa newspaper, The Daily Gate City, in Keokuk, just across the river from Nauvoo. This article reported on a banquet, held six months before the public open house. The banquet was sponsored by the Keokuk Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Church’s director of public affairs for the Nauvoo Restoration, Inc. was the honored guest and keynote speaker. This article highlighted the available details of the open house, and reported the community’s support and enthusiasm for it. Besides quoting from the keynote address, the reporter also quoted the Keokuk tourism director...
touting that “all of the hotel and motel rooms in Keokuk were already full for the six-week (open house) period.”  

Another part of the article explained that a local construction company had received major portions of the project through the bidding process. In plain terms, the Church’s director of public affairs for the Nauvoo Restoration, Inc. was being honored, and the article was written because the community was excited about the economic prospects of the temple’s open house. In his keynote address, the Church’s Nauvoo director speculated that the surrounding communities could expect an increase of 100,000 people a year to Nauvoo, once the temple was completed. This article scored a +1.14.

A few months later, the Daily Gate ran a second article announcing the Church’s intent to extend the open house period due to the overwhelming response to the event. In fact, the article also announced a “Neighbor Days” period during which “interested residents of Lee and Hancock counties” would specifically be offered tours of the building. The remainder of this article contained a detailed explanation as to what locals could expect during a tour of the temple. The positive manner with which this article reported the Church’s extra efforts to extend the open house for the locals led to a score of +1.07.

The next article, which was the fifth one printed, came from the Houston Chronicle. Two years had passed since the first Chronicle article, and this second article recounted the history of the first Nauvoo temple in the 1840s, and the history of the Saints in Illinois. This recounting included truthful detail of the past, but the quickness with which the article moved from beginning to end, along with the lack of source

acknowledgment made the story seem harsh toward Joseph Smith. For instance, one paragraph read, "[Nauvoo] grew along with the temple walls, but so did tensions with non-Mormon neighbors and even within Mormon ranks. [Joseph] Smith, who served as Nauvoo’s major, ordered his police to ransack a dissenting group’s newspaper, which reported [that Joseph Smith] privately practiced polygamy while denying it publicly, and that he had been anointed as king." To a casual reader, this brief, unsupported paragraph could lead to misunderstanding about the Church. The article, nevertheless, focused on mostly favorable topics about the progress of the new temple, and scored +.42. As with the first Houston Chronicle article, the Los Angeles Times also printed a smaller version of this second article. The only difference was that the Times article didn’t mention past history; therefore, the Times article scored higher than the Chronicle article: +1.0.

The next article appeared in Keokuk’s Daily Gate. This article was the only one in this entire study, other than a letter to the editor or a paid advertisement, that received the full double negative (−2.0) score. This happened because the article quoted exclusively and extensively from an ex-Latter-day Saint and his wife. The couple had been invited to present a program at a protestant church designed to inform others about the “truth about Mormonism.” Although similar presentations and anti-“Mormon” efforts have been mentioned in numerous other articles throughout the nation, the papers generally summarized bits and pieces of the message; however, this article was much

more than a summary. Rather, it contained detailed excerpts from the lengthy presentation and was written more in a persuasive tone than in an informative one.

Although the negative information presented in the article was not unique, the comprehensive manner in which it was presented—without any reaction from the Church’s point of view—made this one of the most negatively-slanted articles in the nation. The article begins with the former member “politely” explaining that his purpose was not to “rant against Mormons,” adding “if you’re Mormon, I’m not here to offend you.”

“My family is Mormon,” he added, but then he compared the Church to Enron as he explained, “The people were duped by people inside the company, who really knew what was going on—the books were being cooked. I’m here to show you how (the Mormon) books are being cooked.”

A lengthy description of the former member’s life journey from “Mormonism to Christianity” followed, and from there he offered questionable statements and assumptions about the Church. Here is one excerpt from the article:

20 years ago the Mormon Church hired ‘one of the biggest public relations firms’ to change the existing belief that Mormons were not Christians and that Mormonism was a cult. ‘It worked, didn’t it?’ Rocky Hulse (the ex-Mormon) asked the crowd. ‘On TV we see ads that promote the ideal of family life. But if Mormons are so family-oriented, why is Utah number four (in the U.S.) in teen suicides and number 13 in suicides overall? Why do they have the highest divorce rate, and lead the nation in antidepressant use? Why does violence against women increase every year more rapidly in Utah than anywhere else? Why in the last decade had Utah had 2,000 shaken-baby deaths?’

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31 Ibid.
33 Carolyn Sheridan, “Ex-Mormons tell their version of ‘the truth’,” Daily Gate City, Mar. 19, 2002.
This paragraph is surrounded by many similar paragraphs, in which the reporter makes no effort to verify the statements, share the audience's reaction to the presentation, or provide any rebuttal from the Church's point of view. Three days following this article, the managing editor of the Daily Gate had received such a negative response that he was prompted to write the following:

It was bound to happen sooner or later. By "it" I mean controversy surrounding the Mormon religion. . . . Apparently, some people don't believe we should have published the (previous) story in the Daily Gate City, judging by some phone calls and e-mails I have received this week. Oddly, enough, the complaints seem to be coming from non-Mormons . . . not Mormons. However, we have asked some Mormons in Keokuk if they want to respond to the article; at this point, they have not responded.  

Obviously, for the editor to print a response, the reaction must have been intense, especially since the reaction came from non-"Mormons" defending the Church. For the remainder of this article, the managing editor attempted to justify the printing of the antagonistic article. He explained:

Why is covering the other side of the Mormon story significant now? It's newsworthy because the Mormons have built a Temple across the river in Nauvoo, Ill., that is expected to draw about 250,000 people this year, starting in May. Does running the story about Hulse's appearance in Danville recently mean this newspaper is one-sided? I don't think so. In case you haven't heard, the Daily Gate plans to publish a special section devoted to the new Temple in May. The section will mean extra work for employees of the newspaper, but we think it's worth it, considering the impact the Temple is expected to have on this area. Will the story about Rocky Hulse's appearance scare off Mormons and others from coming to our area to see the new Temple? Again, I don't think so. Although I'm not Mormon, I'll defend their right to exist since we have freedom of religion in this country. I'll also defend the constitutional freedom of speech and press we enjoy in this country.

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34 Steve Dunn, "Mormon article shows there is more than one side," Daily Gate City, Mar. 22, 2002.

35 Ibid.
Evidently, the managing editor felt inclined to defend his constitutional right to freedom of the press. This article scored a −.29 because of the issues that were discussed, but the community’s response had an impact, and the *Daily Gate* did not run any more articles that received a negative score.

Four of the remaining eleven articles focused on the economic impact of the open house. The first article stated that “the 2,000 hotel and motel rooms in Fort Madison, Keokuk, and Burlington are almost all booked,” and that “rooms as far south as Hannibal, Mo., more than an hour away, and as far north as the Quad Cities—a two-hour drive—are taken.” The article also discussed additional events being organized for the tourists to attend, such as, “street dances, ice cream socials, fishing contests, and a horse show.” Another article highlighted the efforts of the local police in preparing for the open house. Special maps and pamphlets had been prepared and printed for each officer to hand out to those in need of assistance. These two pre-open-house articles scored +1.61 and +1.16 respectively.

The other two articles that focused on the economy were printed near the end of the open house period. These articles quoted extensively from restaurant, hotel, motel, campsite, gas station, and special attraction owners. Each of these groups reported a significant increase in business. These articles mostly quoted from Keokuk’s director of tourism and elated business people. These articles received a +1.83 score and a +1.82 score.

Two of the eleven remaining articles were media day articles—one printed by the *Daily Gate*, and the other printed by the *Los Angeles Times*. The *Daily Gate* article

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reported the facts about the tour, the history of the first Nauvoo Temple, and the importance of the rebuilding of the temple to Latter-day Saints. It received a +1.14 score. However, a Los Angeles Times article was much more positive because the author reported non-member reactions to the temple tour. The director of tourism for Keokuk remarked, “It was much more impressive than I could have imagined,” and another non-member added, “It was fantastic. You know that quiet room where they said you could meditate and say a prayer (the celestial room)? Well, I did. It was great.” This article scored a +1.64.

Also during the open house period, an article appeared in the Omaha World-Herald which explained that the Church’s Mormon Trail Center in Winter Quarters, Nebraska, had received record numbers of visitors due to Church members headed to Illinois for the temple dedication. This article scored a +1.5.

During all of this positive newspaper exposure, there was one editorial that both criticized and complimented the Church. The author felt that, due to the influx of Latter-day Saints, Christians in the community were “cramming” to know their own doctrine and how to refute Mormon doctrine. In the following excerpt from the article, notice how the comments compliment the Church’s commitment, but also how the author places the Church as inferior to other Christian churches:

> Are we now cramming to meet the exam ahead, trying to gain information that may only stay with us long enough to meet the challenge immediately ahead? Should we rather be giving more attention to what we perceive from our own beliefs to be the “real truth” by making diligent effort to not only develop our faith but also see to it that those convictions are reflected in our lives. The Christian church may be at odds with Mormonism, but

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we have much to learn from the commitment their church members have to each other and to the doctrine to which they adhere. . . . I have heard the arguments that Mormonism looks like Christianity but in fact is not a Christian faith. Could it be that Christians need to spend more time and energy studying what is real rather than what they perceive to be counterfeit? It is time, perhaps, for the Christians to quit "playing Church" and take seriously this life we profess to embrace. 40

Overall, the article was a backhanded compliment to the Church, and scored a +.25.

The Daily Gate printed the three final articles. The first invited the public to attend a free concert and live broadcast of the "Music and the Spoken Word" performed by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir at the temple site in Nauvoo. It received a +1.67 score. 41 The second article announced the plans for the dedication of the temple and summarized the success of the open house, "The dedication caps a seven-week open house for the temple that drew 332,000 people from every state in the United States and from 70 countries." 42 The final article reported on the dedication itself. This article was full of details about the time capsule placed in the cornerstone, the cornerstone ceremony, and explained that the proceedings "broadcast live to 2,300 locations in 72 countries for 3.5 million church members." 43 This article scored +1.3.

In all, 20 articles were collected for the Nauvoo Illinois Temple. This chart illustrates their comparative scores:

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One pattern in this study showed that usually twenty or more articles about a single temple signified opposition and conflict toward a temple, but, for the most part in
this case, the high number of articles was driven by the significance and national interest in the Nauvoo Temple.

The one anti-Mormon article was unique in this study because it was the only one written by a reporter that received a -2.0 score. In spite of this, the Nauvoo Temple’s articles’ average score remained high at +.97.

**Midwest Region Summary**

In the newspaper coverage in the Midwest Region, the influence of the author’s viewpoint became very evident. Generally, reporters tell both sides of a story, using reliable sources from each side, but this was not the dominant pattern in this region. Rather, some reporters were not concerned about remaining neutral and didn’t mind writing more for one side or the other. Interestingly, most of the reporters took positive approaches in the articles, and the region averaged a +1.06 score. The following chart reviews each temple’s average score:

![Midwest Region's Averages Chart](image)
Chapter 6

The Southeast Region

Latter-day Saint History in the Region

The states of Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee make up the region. These states were traversed by some of the greatest missionaries of the early Church period which initiated the Latter-day Saint influence in the region. Apostles and future Apostles, such as David W. Patten, Parley P. Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, and Jedediah M. Grant, and other well-known missionaries, such as Samuel H. Smith, Phineas Young, and Reynolds Cahoon, along with lesser-known missionaries all labored and left an impact on this region.¹

When the main body of the Latter-day Saints left Nauvoo and headed west under Brigham Young's direction, many stalwart converts in this region migrated west as well. With the faithful leaving and the Civil War approaching, missionary work halted in the region for a time. When it resumed, work was slow and difficult: some missionaries and members were even killed because of their religious beliefs. But, as tolerance increased, growth occurred, and the first stakes in the region were organized in 1947 in South Carolina and Florida. A decade later, two more states had organized stakes—Virginia and Georgia. The remaining eight states all had organized stakes in the succeeding


Atlanta, Georgia received the first temple in the region in 1983, and it was the only temple in the region until 1994 when another was dedicated in Orlando, Florida. During the period of this study, six additional temples were built in the region. All six of these temples were dedicated either in 1999, or during the “year of the goal” (2000)—Columbia South Carolina Temple (1999), Raleigh North Carolina Temple (1999), Louisville Kentucky Temple (2000), Memphis Tennessee Temple (2000), Nashville Tennessee Temple (2000), and Birmingham Alabama Temple (2000).³

South Carolina

Since South Carolina’s first stake was organized in 1947, five additional stakes, a mission, and now a temple have been established within the state. For many years the closest temples to South Carolina had been the Atlanta Georgia Temple, and the Washington D.C. Temple. Building a temple within the state dramatically cut the distances members previously had to travel to attend a temple.

Columbia South Carolina Temple

Three articles were collected for the Columbia South Carolina Temple: a groundbreaking article, a media day article, and an open house article. One theme that the Columbia newspaper, The State, chose to emphasize was the great distance Latter-day Saints had to travel prior to this temple being built. One convert to the Church explained

³ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints website at http://www.lds.org/temples/chronological.
that when she was married, the closest temple was in Salt Lake City. Her parents and her husband’s parents were unable to afford the trip to attend the ceremony. The woman joyfully remarked, “now, I live seven minutes away. I drive there and think, ‘I cannot believe this is true.’”\(^4\) Another member reminisced that when she and her family joined the Church, the closest temple was the Washington D.C. Temple, and her family took a Thanksgiving Holiday weekend to attend. She explained, “It’s not [a trip] that I want to repeat, but it’s not one that I’d give up for anything.”\(^5\) These stories reaffirm President Hinckley’s prophetic vision of building smaller temples closer to the Saints. The remainder of each article’s information was positive and typical of groundbreaking, media day, and open house articles throughout the nation. Each of these articles scored as shown on the chart below:

![Columbia South Carolina Temple Article Scores](chart)

The average score of these three articles is +1.12.

**North Carolina**

Church membership in North Carolina has grown rapidly since the state’s first stake was organized in 1961. Since then, 13 stakes and two missions have been established.

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\(^4\) Allison Askins, “Mormons bring temple home/the new Columbia house of worship allows Mormons to observe sacred rituals without traveling long distances,” *The State*, October 1, 1999, Section E1.

\(^5\) Allison Askins, “Mormons bring temple home/the new Columbia house of worship allows Mormons to observe sacred rituals without traveling long distances,” *The State*, October 1, 1999, Section E1.
organized. Before the Raleigh North Carolina Temple was announced, members traveled 260 miles to attend the Washington D.C. Temple.

**Raleigh North Carolina Temple**

The Raleigh North Carolina Temple was built in a town called Apex, and most of the community of Apex was very accepting of the Temple. The assistant town manager of Apex stated, “We’re always welcoming newcomers,” and a resident added, “I’m all for diversity. I like the different opinions that circulate.” But, when the open house period arrived, an evangelical Christian group got a permit from the city to demonstrate and hand out pamphlets.

Like Columbia, South Carolina’s paper, Raleigh’s local newspaper, *The News and Observer*, also focused on the tremendous growth of the Church in this state. In three of the four articles, statements such as the following were written, “In the past 20 years, the number of Mormons across the state has nearly tripled, from 19,000 in 1977 to 53,000 in 1999. Of the southern states, only Florida and Virginia have more.” Another article called 1999 a “red letter year” for the local Saints, because not only was the state building its first temple, but President Hinckley also visited that year.

Overall, the four articles collected for the Raleigh Temple were scored as follows:

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These scores yield an overall average of +1.08. The media day article scored lower than the other articles because it contained information such as caffeine in conjunction with Mormon doctrine, reported on the current evangelical opposition in the area, and brought up North Carolina's rejection of the Saints' plea for a place of safety to settle after Joseph Smith had been murdered in 1844.

**Kentucky**

As was the case with many of the states in this region, the Church experienced tremendous membership growth in Kentucky throughout the decade of the 1990s. Before President Hinckley announced that a temple would be built in Louisville, Kentucky, the closest temples were either the St. Louis Missouri Temple, or the Washington D.C. Temple.

*Louisville Kentucky Temple*

The first article about the Louisville Kentucky Temple coincided with its groundbreaking. It was obvious from the information presented in the article that the author attended the ceremony. One of the major points of the article, which was a significant focus in many of the newspapers throughout this region, was the growth of the Church in the state. From there, the focus turned to family history work and its connection to the work done in Latter-day Saint temples. This led to a brief explanation
of each ordinance performed in the temple on behalf of the deceased. And the article ended with the author bringing up topics like the Baptist Convention held in Utah in 1998 and the Church’s past with controversial issues like polygamy and blacks and priesthood. Overall, this article was positive and received +.77 score.

The next article printed by the Courier—Journal, Louisville’s newspaper, the media day article, quoted from eight different Latter-day Saint sources. They described how the distance to the nearest temple in the past had required great sacrifice for many members to attend. They further explained how this new temple would be a blessing to the state’s members. The reporter also described the interior of the building in glowing terms, and the article received a +1.12 score.

The final article printed by the Courier—Journal was a paid advertisement by the Church inviting all to attend the open house. This article received a +1.0 score.

In addition to the three Courier—Journal articles, a smaller newspaper entitled The Oldham Era, which circulates in a suburb of Louisville, also printed three articles. The first article detailed an interview with the construction superintendent of the temple. The superintendent was from Oldham, and the article mostly highlighted his family and himself. The second and third articles were printed on the same day. The second article reported on the success of the open house, and the final article was a reprint of a Church pamphlet handed to the media during the tour. This pamphlet explained the proper name of the Church versus the Church’s nickname—“Mormon”. These articles scored a +1.0, +1.10, and +1.0 respectively.

In all, six articles covered the Louisville Kentucky Temple’s construction, and the scores are reviewed below:
The Louisville Kentucky Temple articles average an overall score of +1.0.

**Tennessee**

Well before the smaller temple concept was revealed, President Hinckley had announced that Nashville, Tennessee, would receive a large regional temple. Unfortunately, the temple’s progress was delayed by both political and judicial processes. After many years of seeking public official’s approval for the project without results, the concept of smaller temples provided a resolution to the delay. Instead of building one large regional temple in Tennessee, the Church decided to build two smaller ones.

**Memphis Tennessee Temple**

One of these two smaller temples was built in Memphis, Tennessee. Seven articles were collected for this temple, and five of the seven articles were printed elsewhere in the nation before *The Commercial Appeal*, Memphis’ major paper, reprinted them. The first article focused on President Hinckley, and his tenure as president of the Church. It told of his travels, his vitality, and his announcement to have 100 temples built by the turn of the century. This article was published a month before the announcement that Memphis would be receiving a temple, and it received a +1.33 scoring.
A local Memphis reporter wrote the second article, covering the groundbreaking ceremony of the temple. With one temple already announced to be built in Nashville, a second temple in Tennessee was surprising and exciting to the Memphis Church membership. A local Church spokesman in Memphis explained that Nashville was originally supposed to receive one of the larger temples, but, due to city approval complications, the design was changed to be one of the smaller temples. The rest of the article described why temples are so important to Latter-day Saints, and explained that local members formerly had to travel to St. Louis, Missouri, or Atlanta, Georgia, to attend the nearest temple. This article was given a +.98 score.

The third article was originally printed in a Florida newspaper. This article covered an interview with Gladys Knight. Although this article is not about the temple itself, it was printed between the groundbreaking and dedication of the temple and provided exposure to the Church which might influence a reader to be more interested in the Church and the temple. This article was extremely positive. After extolling all the worldly accomplishments Gladys had achieved in her life, the article read, “Knight’s teeth, like her eyes, are sparkling. And there’s a definite radiance about her. . . . The best thing that’s ever happened to her? ‘Becoming a Mormon,’ she replies without pause.” The remainder of the article explains how Gladys became a Latter-day Saint and what it has meant to her life. This article was so positive toward the Church that it received a +1.71 score.

The next article, which The Commercial Appeal published was from the Associated Press, and it described the significant growth in Latter-day Saint membership
throughout the southeastern portion of the United States. The article quoted from the Church Almanac to show that Latter-day Saint membership had grown by 80 to 100 percent since 1980 in the region, and that there were a total of seven temples under construction at the time. The article also quoted from a few people from the South who had joined the Church. One man who left his Baptist upbringing to join the Church shared that it is hard for most southerners to leave the religion to which their families belong.10 A professor from Emory University’s theology school attributed the Church’s growth to the large number of Mormons who have moved into that area and then worked to bring in more converts.11 This professor also said that the “perception of Mormons as hardworking, moral citizens” has also led to success in the region.12 Near the end of the article, the author noted that the Church had not been without its opposition in the region, and told of a time when a mob killed four members of the Church during a service in 1884. It also referenced the Southern Baptists’ 1998 Annual Convention that had been held in Salt Lake City. One Southern Baptist Reverend explained that he felt the mutual feelings of Christians and the “Mormons” over time would break down because of doctrinal differences between the two groups.13 Although both sides of the story were presented in this article, the positive side dominated, and the article scored a +.83.

The final three articles all covered the open house, and aside from the typical open house information, they each contained a different message. One emphasized the Church’s genealogical work, reporting that the new temple was situated next to a Family
History center, which, interestingly, was predominantly used by non-Latter-day Saints. Another emphasized the growth of the Church and the need to build temples closer to the members. The final article focused on the persecution of the Church in the past, and how temples in Tennessee and throughout the South were excellent indications that times had changed. Each of these articles scored +1.17, +1.0, and +1.10 respectively.

![Memphis Tennessee Temple Article Scores](image)

From the chart above, it is evident that the Knight and Hinckley interview articles well out-scored the others. The interviewees in each of those two articles were not portrayed as weird or fanatical, and the authors' comments placed the Church in a positive light. All together, these seven articles scored a +1.16 average.

**Nashville Tennessee Temple**

From the beginning, opposition to a Latter-day Saint temple in the quiet, mostly residential town of Forest Hills, Tennessee, a suburb of Nashville, was intense. The first article printed by Nashville's major newspaper, *The Tennessean*, was filled with protests from citizens. The article began:

> Middle Tennessee Mormons want to build their new temple on Old Hickory Boulevard in Forest Hills. Not if the next-door neighbor's prayers are answered. A homeowner living next to the proposed site for the temple says such a building will only increase traffic and disrupt the neighborhood's quiet. 'My understanding is the winner at zoning meetings is the side that screams the loudest,' said Michael Goldston, who
has started a letter-writing campaign against the building. "I plan to shout as loud as I can."  

The remainder of the article highlighted this disgruntled neighbor's efforts to block the temple, and reported that he was receiving mounting support from many members of the community.

The Church spokesman's response within the article was not strong when compared to the determination of these neighbors. He simply stated, "Neighborhood resistance to a proposed temple is not uncommon until people learn more about it." Then he added, "The Church proposes to add a turning lane in front of the property, and, in any case, traffic flow would be smooth there, because the temple functions don't call for huge numbers of people at a time." The article went on to describe the functions of a temple and why it was different from a regular meeting house.

As promised, when the zoning commission in Forest Hills met to review the Church's proposal to rezone the land from residential use to religious use, one hundred and twenty "loud" residents packed the meeting house. During the meeting, one of the planning committee members informed everyone that the board had received numerous letters and phone calls during the week that were "all against the change." (emphasis added) The article mentioned only one person who was in favor of the temple, expressing her concern that opposition to the temple was due to religious discrimination. This "brought groans from the crowd," and those who opposed the

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16 Ibid.
17 Beth Warren, "Residents turn out to oppose temple," *The Tennessean*, Dec. 9, 1994, Section B3.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
The zoning commission voted to delay their final vote on the matter until the next meeting.

When the commission reconvened, they voted unanimously against the project. It must be pointed out that it had been more than three years since any parcel of land in Forest Hills had been rezoned from the city's master plan. Once again, an article reported that the opposition group had gathered in great numbers at this meeting to share their concerns about the project. One man, who was concerned about increased traffic due to the temple, stated, "If this is approved, there's going to be a lot of people buried because of it." On the other hand, holding out hope for a future agreement, the Church's spokesman only responded to the vote by saying, "This is just a recommendation, and we'll revisit the issues with the City Commission."

The conflict heightened as the Church announced its intent to challenge the commission's vote in court. Lawyers for the Church claimed that "Forest Hills' zoning plan makes it impossible to rezone any property for religious use, and therefore, violates the religious freedom provisions of both the U.S. and Tennessee constitutions." After the threat to sue, nothing more was printed for eight months. The next article's headline read, "Mormon Temple Rejected."

Without any information about a new proposal or about the lawsuit, the next article printed informed readers that for a second time the Forest Hills Planning Commission had rejected a new Latter-day Saint's rezoning request by a vote of 4-3.

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20 Beth Warren, "Residents turn out to oppose temple," The Tennessean, Dec. 9, 1994, Section B3.
22 Ibid.
23 Kirk Loggins, "Mormons head to court to gain temple zoning," The Tennessean, April 8, 1995.
25 Ibid.
This article was confusing because it did not explain any of the details of the new proposal, but the voting was much closer this time. Only two members of the commission were quoted in the article. One was the mayor of Forest Hills, and he explained that he was against the rezoning because he felt it did not fit into the city’s master plan. The second quoted board member was the former mayor of the city, and he was in favor of the rezoning. He stated, “I feel the traffic concerns are just a ‘red herring’ to deny the request.”\(^26\) He also explained, “There are churches diagonally across [from the Latter-day Saint selected location], so I do not see where it’s [the vote] consistent.”\(^27\)

Apparently, this 4–3 vote was not final because a number of articles followed, which reported public hearings on the issue. One article reported that the struggle had turned into a “16 month saga.”\(^28\) The opponents to the temple still “cited traffic congestion and a decline in property values as reasons why they don’t want the temple.”\(^29\) One opponent questioned the exclusive nature of the temple, “At any time it is open, will I be allowed to go in?”\(^30\) During the hearing, only one non-Latter-day Saint member of the community sided with the Church; he reasoned, “I think if the community turns this down it’s going to make the citizens of Forest Hills appear to be something we’re not: spiteful and mean-spirited.”\(^31\)

At this point in the conflict, two non-Latter-day Saint members of the Forest Hill community suggested that there was more to the opposition than just concerns of traffic and property value, but the article failed to clarify what the root concern was. The next

\(^{27}\) Ibid.
\(^{29}\) Ibid.
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
\(^{31}\) Ibid.
three articles shed some understanding on the issue. Two of these were printed in *The Tennessean*, which to this point had been the only source of articles, but a third article was printed in the *Brentwood Journal*; Brentwood is a town adjacent to Forest Hills.

These three articles explained that in the eight-month interim between the two city rezoning votes, before actually suing the city, the Church took the Forest Hills commission’s suggestions from the first rezoning meeting, and found another site within the city that met every suggestion. The second rezoning vote was over this second site, and despite meeting all the city’s requirements, it also failed. Hence, the “mean,” “spiteful,” and “red herring” comments in the previous article.

One final vote regarding this second site was taken by a three-member city commission board, and it failed by a 2-1 vote. Two members of the commission board cited traffic and lighting as reasons for voting against the project, and the only member of the board who voted in favor of the project said, “I really felt that is the best use for the land.” He added, “I don’t think that site will ever be used for building estate homes because it’s on a corner that is already predominantly religious.”

32 After purchasing two considerably large and expensive lots of land in Forest Hills, and being rejected twice, the Church did file a law suit against the city of Forest Hills.

As is common with law suits, this one took time, and between the filing and the verdict, three additional articles were published in *The Tennessean*. Two of the three articles were negative toward the Church, and both of these articles happened to have been printed on the same day and authored by the same reporter.

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One article reported that a national student athletic club named Fellowship of Christian Athletes had selected a young man in the Nashville area as Male Athlete of the year, but when the club’s hierarchy found out that the young man was a Latter-day Saint they revoked the honor on grounds that “Mormons aren’t Christians.” The lengthy article went on to state that “It’s been a tough year for the Mormons of Middle Tennessee,” and then recounted how the city of Forest Hills had rejected rezoning requests on two different locations. The article went on to say that this wasn’t the first time Latter-day Saints have had a run in with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. In the past there had been three other young Latter-day Saint boys voted into positions of leadership in the club, only to later be demoted when those higher up learned of their religious affiliation.

The second article furthered the point that “Mormons” aren’t Christians by announcing the South Baptists’ intention to hold a convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, to proselytize “Mormons” to Christianity. The article was written to sensationalize a showdown between the two groups.

The third article, which wasn’t as negative toward the Church as the previous two, nevertheless informed the public that the Latter-day Saint Church was forced to purchase the second parcel of land (21 acres) because of real estate purchasing time requirements despite the fact that approval for rezoning the site was tied up in the courts.

One year after it was filed, the case was finally brought before a judge. An article was printed which spelled out the position of both sides. The Church’s lawyer declared,

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34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
“Cities cannot ban churches. Neither can they pick and choose among those they like and the ones with which they are most familiar.”38 The Forest Hill attorney’s rebuttal was “this is not a neighborhood church. People would be coming from seven states for specified ceremonies.”39

Three months later, the judge ruled against the Church. The Church’s attorney responded, “Our position is that a city cannot exclude churches,” and noted that the Church would most likely appeal the ruling.40 While the Forest Hill attorney maintained that the city had not banned all future church construction, they were against this one because of how big a building it was and how many people it would serve.41 The judge stated that she “did not find any direct, overt, or indirect discrimination” in the city’s handling of the two rezoning requests.42

The next article surfaced shortly after the April 1998 general conference, when President Hinckley announced the goal to have 100 temples by the end of the year 2000. This article notified the public that the Church was not going to appeal the court decision, but rather the Church was looking to build one of its smaller temples at a different location in Nashville. This temple would service a much smaller area than the previously planned temple because many more temples were going to be placed throughout surrounding states.43

The public did not find out about the new location for the temple until November of that year (1998). This article announced that a site located next to a stake center in

39 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
Franklin, Tennessee, another suburb of Nashville, had been selected for the smaller temple. The article then recounted the previous attempts made in Forest Hills, and added that the newest site also needed approval. In addition to the information about the new location, this article also informed readers that another of the smaller temples was to be built in Memphis, Tennessee.\footnote{Ray Waddle, “Mormons plan temple near Franklin,” The Tennessean, Nov. 12 1998, Section B1.}

A few weeks later, an article appeared in the Brentwood Journal, which likewise announced the temple’s new location in Franklin, Tennessee, but this article contained news of opposition, once again, raised by the neighbors of the newly selected site. These residents were “concerned that the structure (was) highly out of character for this particular area.”\footnote{Carly Irion, “Latter-day Saints to build temple,” The Brentwood Journal, Nov. 26, 1998, Section A3.}

Four more articles ran in The Tennessean before the Franklin City Planning Board’s final vote on this third Nashville site. The first of these articles explained in great detail the proposed rezoning of two parcels of land into one parcel, and the window of opportunity the Church had of being awarded the height allowance on the building’s spire.\footnote{Kathrin Chavez, “A Special Mormon Presence,” The Tennessean, Dec. 4, 1998, Section W1.} The second article’s headline read, “Displeased Franklin Homeowners Silenced On Mormon Temple.”\footnote{Amy Marchese, “Displeased Franklin homeowners silenced on Mormon temple,” The Tennessean, Dec. 14, 1998.} This article reported that a dozen people left a public hearing extremely frustrated because they were “told they could address only the issue of rezoning the property, not the nature of the building proposed for it.”\footnote{Ibid.} And when they tried to voice their concerns, such as, “we do not support a temple,” they were interrupted
by the chairman of the commission and told, "It's not the time for that, I'm sorry." The reporter then highlighted all the materials those in opposition had prepared for the public hearing, and how frustrated they were to be silenced by the chairman. The article ended by stating that the rezoning of the parcel had passed.\(^{50}\)

The next hurdle was the spire, but the third article reported that the height variance had passed as well.\(^{51}\) The fourth article was printed the day of the final approval vote by the planning commission. This article reviewed the past four years of delays and ended by guessing that the Church's quest would probably be realized.\(^{52}\)

Ten months passed, and an article in the real estate section of the newspaper reported on the progress of the temple. It highlighted the quality of the material being imported for the building, and discussed the local contractors and sub-contractors involved in the project. More time passed, and then two articles reported before and then after, respectively, the placing of the statue of the angel Moroni.

When the open house period for the Nashville Temple arrived, four positive and typical media day, pre-open house, open house, and newly called temple president articles were printed in \textit{The Tennessean}. However, during the final days of the open house, a front page article stated that 35 area pastors had banned together to create pamphlets which explained why they believed Mormons weren't Christians.\(^{53}\) In addition to the opposition from the local pastors, the article also pointed out that members of an anti-"Mormon" California-based group had driven all the way to Tennessee to hand

\(^{50}\) Ibid.  
\(^{52}\) Amy Marchese, "County planners expected to OK Mormon temple," \textit{The Tennessean}, Feb. 11, 1999, Section W1.  
\(^{53}\) Kathrin Chavez, "Pastors say Mormons not real Christians," \textit{The Tennessean}.  

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out literature during the open house. Unfortunately, the same day that this anti-Mormon article ran, another article tried to cover such vast topics as being married eternally, being sealed to more than one person, and becoming a god with worlds and children. Needless to say, the author did not explain these topics eloquently or smoothly, and both of these articles served as a hurtful reminder of the past six years of opposition against the temple.

Following these negative articles, a string of editorials and letters to the editor appeared in *The Tennessean*. One letter, written by the senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in Franklin, Tennessee, stated his disagreement with his local clergy friends who circulated literature denouncing the “Mormons” as Christians. He went on to write why he believed “Mormons” were Christians, recounting his many positive associations and interactions with members of the Church serving others.

Another letter to the editor criticized the local religious leaders for using the newspaper to bash another religion. One part of this letter read, “One thing is for sure: barbs between denominations quickly turn folks off, particularly the unchurched of the society that various faith groups go after for membership.” He continued, “To some readers, [using the newspaper to speak against another religion] makes the message more political and in pursuit of things of value in this world—not the next.”

A final editorial, written by a *Tennessean* staff writer, compared the recent anti-“Mormon” rhetoric passed out at the temple’s open house to the anti-Catholic rhetoric of

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the 1960s and 1970s. Having grown up as a Catholic and remembering the abusive things printed and spread about his Church, this reporter felt the pastor's response during the open house was similar. The point of his article was to show how cruel certain religious groups can be in the battle for membership.58

Thirty-five articles were printed about the Nashville Tennessee Temple over a period of six years. The 35 articles were as follows:

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The Nashville Tennessee Temple represents the only temple in this study in which the Church spent millions of dollars on the location and legal fees, only to ultimately lose in the court and not build on land bought. The newspaper coverage of this defeat was some of the most negative in the nation. The average score for the 35 articles was \(-.13\).

**Alabama**

As was the case with many of the states within this region, Alabama’s increase in membership was significant, and the distance to the nearest temple was great. Therefore, the smaller temple concept warranted a temple in Alabama.
Birmingham Alabama Temple

The first two articles in the Birmingham News concerning the Birmingham Alabama Temple were printed just two days apart. The first article announced the upcoming groundbreaking for the Birmingham Alabama Temple, and discussed eternal marriage, baptisms, genealogy work, and the excitement of the local Saints. It quoted the surprise of the local Baptist minister, who stated, "I never dreamed there would be [a temple] right here. They're highly principled, very moral people. I don't see that as a threat."\(^{59}\) Two days later, however, the second article announced an embarrassing mistake. The Chairman of the Indian Spring planning committee, a community near Birmingham, Alabama, explained that he was shocked that the Church had set a groundbreaking date because no city permits had been obtained for the project. The rest of the article contained the Church's apology for the mistake, and stated that there had been a communication error.\(^{60}\) Needless to say the first article scored a premature +.80 and the second scored an embarrassing −.67.

Having learned from the debacle above, the Birmingham News did not print anything more about the temple until the ground was already cleared at its site. This article also revealed that the originally selected site for the temple had run into "a zoning dispute and then soil-testing problems" which forced the Church to change sites.\(^{61}\) Besides this brief explanation, the rest of the article indicated that all was going well at the final selected site, resulting in a +.70 scoring for this article.

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When the temple was a third of the way through the construction phase, a fourth article was printed. This article quoted solely from a Church service construction missionary from Idaho who gave the reporter a tour of the project site and described the structure in great detail. In addition to design and material details, the missionary also mentioned that the Church had experienced “a bit of opposition from some in the area when selecting the site [for the temple] yet when [city officials and the Church] settled on Gardendale and started work here, there has been nothing but good things from the people [in the community] involved.”\(^{62}\) This article scored a +1.0.

The media day article was typical until the end when the reporter brought up temple marriages and polygamy, and tried to link the two together. The Church’s spokesman’s response was fair, but the reporter did not write it well in the article, leaving this portion of the article a little confusing to the casual reader.\(^{63}\) The article scored +.56.

During the open house, another article described the efforts of a group of evangelicals who handed out anti-“Mormon” literature during the week-long open house. A formerly endowed member of the Church was among those handing out the anti-“Mormon” literature, and he was quoted extensively throughout the article. His comments were extremely negative toward the Church. When questioned about the opposition, a local stake president responded, “Mostly we’ve gotten glowing reports and a great reception from the community.”\(^{64}\) He then explained that the purpose of the open house was to show everything to the public and to answer any questions about the

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The article ended by stating, "Dozens of Gardendale residents have taken part in the tract distribution. Others are appalled by what they say is lack of hospitality for the Mormons. 'It just seems in very poor taste,' said Ed Sellers of Gardendale. 'If you don't agree with them, then don't go to their Church.'" This article received a -0.40.

The next article reported an interview with the newly called temple president. The article quoted solely from the temple president. He explained how he was called and testified that he knew the call was from a prophet of God. He described what his responsibilities would be, and explained the doctrinal concepts of sealing and baptizing on behalf of the dead. These explanations were clear and thoughtful. This article scored a +1.04.

The final article published by the Birmingham News covered the dedication and cornerstone ceremony. As was typical with many dedication articles throughout the nation, the reporter was focused on President Hinckley’s sense of humor and interaction with the audience, and provided a step by step explanation of the event. This article scored a +1.0.

The following chart compares the scores of the articles printed about the Birmingham Alabama Temple:

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65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
The Birmingham Alabama Temple average score was +.50.

Southeast Region Summary

The most consistent message written in the Southeast region newspaper coverage was the amazement over the Church's growth. The Commercial Appeal, Memphis's major newspaper, quoted statistical information for each southern state from the Church's Almanac, and then quoted a professor of Emory College's Theological School, who explained, "The growth is due primarily to an influx of Mormons from other regions and the Church's efforts to increase its visibility in the South."69 Another article printed in The News & Observer, Raleigh, North Carolina's newspaper, noted, "In the past 20 years, the number of Mormons across the state has nearly tripled, from 19,000 in 1977 to

53,000. Of the Southern states, only Florida and Virginia have more. This focus was extremely positive for the Church, and the average coverage for the six temples in the region were as follows:

As seen above, the Nashville Tennessee Temple received the only negative average in the region. This was due to the drawn out, heated controversy surrounding the temple. The Birmingham Alabama Temple also received some negative coverage due to anti-“Mormon” efforts during the open house, and the premature announcing of the temple’s groundbreaking when the permits had not been approved. Other than that, the other articles for the Birmingham Temple and the remaining four temples scored consistently high because the majority of the articles quoted the positive reactions of non-members. Overall, this region received a +.79 average score.

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Chapter 7
The East Region

Latter-day Saint History in the Region

The East Region holds a significant place in the hearts of Latter-day Saints, for here the restoration of the Church began. The states of New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Rhode Island make up the region. In New York, such events as the First Vision, the printing of the Book of Mormon, and the organization of the Church took place. In Pennsylvania, Joseph Smith met his wife Emma, most of the translation of the Golden Plates occurred, and the Aaronic Priesthood was restored. Even after persecution in Pennsylvania and New York led to revelations instructing the Saints to gather to Ohio, missionary work in this region proved productive. But, as the main body of Saints moved farther west and eventually out of the United States all together, missionary work halted for a time.¹

The Church's interest in the East region was rekindled around the turn of the twentieth century, when it began to purchase properties of particular interest. In New York, the Church purchased the Joseph Smith Sr. farm, the Peter Whitmer farm, the

Martin Harris farm, and the Hill Cumorah in the decades of the 1920s and the 1930s. In fact, a stake was organized in New York in 1934. It was the first stake east of the Rocky Mountains and only the third stake located outside a Latter-day Saint settlement founded in the late nineteenth century.²

Aside from the Latter-day Saint interest in the Church’s past, Church growth in this region was slow. Then in the 1960s and 1970s, when more members of the Church came from the West to go to school and work in the East, the Church began to build more chapels, increase missionary work, and organize more stakes. The following stakes were organized in the decade of the 1960s: Pennsylvania (1960), New Jersey (1960), and Connecticut (1966). In the following decade Maryland (1970), Delaware (1974), and Rhode Island (1977) received stakes as well.³

Since the abandonment of the Kirtland and original Nauvoo Temples, the first temple east of the Rocky Mountains was built in Kensington, Maryland in 1974. This temple became known as the Washington D.C. Temple, and it served as the only temple in this region for almost twenty years until plans were announced to build another temple in the Hartford, Connecticut (1992). However, a suitable location was never found in the Hartford area, so the Church changed plans and announced (1995) that two temples would be built instead: one in Boston, Massachusetts, and the other in Harrison, New York. Interestingly, both of these temples ran into a lot of opposition and construction was delayed for many years. The second temple completed in the region was the Palmyra New York Temple. Fittingly, on the 170th anniversary of the Church’s

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organization—in “the year of the goal” (2000)—the Palmyra, New York Temple was dedicated. Since that time, only the Manhattan New York Temple has been dedicated (2004). The Harrison New York Temple has yet to break ground, and the Boston Massachusetts Temple will be discussed in the next chapter because it is in the Northeast Region.

New York

Aside from the Washington D.C. Temple, each of the other temples currently dedicated or announced in this region lies within the boundaries of the state of New York. The two temples currently dedicated within the state—the Palmyra Temple and the Manhattan Temple—are each unique. The Palmyra New York Temple is unique in that it was not built near large numbers of members, but instead stands as a reminder of what had taken place since the First Vision. The Manhattan New York Temple, on the other hand, was needed for a growing Latter-day Saint population in New York City, but the design was unique. Its design is similar to the uniquely inspired design of the Hong Kong Temple. Likewise, the third temple to be built in the state, the Harrison New York Temple, has the unique distinction of having the longest waiting period between announcement and actual beginning of construction.

Palmyra New York Temple

Nine articles were collected regarding the Palmyra New York Temple from Palmyra’s nearest major metropolitan newspaper, the Democrat and Chronicle, printed in Rochester, New York. The announcement article appeared on the front page of the paper, and contained usual information about the excitement of the Saints, the significance of the location, and the purpose of the structure. This article scored a +1.05.
The two articles following the announcement informed readers about the public zoning meetings. The first of these articles hinted that the zoning board would approve the project, as very promising comments were made by the chairman of the zoning committee. He said, “I am satisfied that enough information has been gathered. A traffic study has been completed by a consultant hired by the town, and the consultant reported that the traffic would increase but not significantly.” The article also mentioned that “many neighbors—from Palmyra and Manchester—have welcomed the plan as another boost to the local economy. But others have raised concerns that the temple will negatively affect their neighborhoods by increasing traffic and adding invasive lighting.” The concerns about the project only occupied a small portion of the article, and the majority of the article contained positive comments from non-“Mormon” sources. Therefore, this article scored a +1.05.

The next article’s headline read in large, bold letters, “One more chance to be heard on temple,” and the subtitle read, “Neighbors opposed to the Mormon site will be able to speak at hearing tonight.” In a previous public meeting those who attended were not given the opportunity to speak, and this article reported that that meeting had been mistakenly advertised as a public forum when in fact it was not, and that the time for public debate had passed. When those who attended the previous meeting were not permitted to speak they were so upset that the zoning board decided to add an additional meeting at which the public could speak, which was being publicized in this article. The major complaints raised by the neighboring residents were similar to those seen

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5 Ibid.
throughout the nation—traffic and lighting—however, the zoning board stated that they felt comfortable with the final agreements concerning these two items and had already approved the project. As one board member put it, “unless some new factual information”\(^7\) was going to be presented in the meeting, the previous month’s approval vote would stand. This article was fairly balanced in reporting both sides of the story, and it scored a +.07.

Although no follow up article was written about the meeting, the city’s vote remained unchanged because the next article covered groundbreaking events. This article quoted extensively from comments made during the ceremony. Most notably were President Hinckley’s comments, and one quote in particular that appeared in two of the five remaining articles, was as follows, “I regard this temple as perhaps the most significant in one respect in the entire church. This is where it all began. I marvel at what has happened here. From this place, this work has spread over the Earth to more than 160 nations and to more than 10 million people. Who could ever have imagined it?”\(^8\) This article received a +.91 score.

Five months after the groundbreaking article, an article which pictured about 200 people watching the placing of the angel Moroni atop the temple was printed. Although the event was not officially announced, many of the people who arrived for the event drove hundreds of miles to attend. Besides reporting the jubilant reaction of the members in attendance, one non-Latter-day Saint construction worker remarked that the temple was “the strongest building he has ever seen constructed.”\(^9\) The author pointed out that

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\(^7\) Ibid.


once the temple was dedicated, this man would never be able to set foot in it again, but this did not affect the overall positive nature of the article. It received a +.94 score.

The next articles were published on the same day. The first one was prominently placed as the main story on the front page. A large picture of a locally well-known member of the Church and his wife standing next to the temple accompanied the article, which recounted the significance of the area and this temple in the history of the Church. All of the times, and dates, and a map concerning the temple’s open house were printed as well, and the article scored a +1.02.

The second article was equally positive. This article reported on the community’s hope that the temple would bring new opportunities for economic growth. Local business owners of restaurants and lodging facilities reported that 80% of their customers were Latter-day Saints, and they hoped that the temple would draw more business. The article did mention one fear that some community members felt—that the Church had planned “a major development such as a college” next to the temple, but the local stake president explained, “The Church is not in the business of building a university, rather the land [next to the temple] might be used for a new chapel if the congregation outgrows the existing one.”

Palmyra’s city clerk defended the Church in the article, stating, “This is a great journey for us. The Church is a good neighbor, and we’re excited about the opportunities it may bring.” This article scored a +1.06.

The eighth article printed by the *Democrat and Chronicle* covered the temple’s dedication. The reporter focused on the cornerstone ceremony and the success of the open house which drew 32,000 visitors. This article received a +1.0 score.

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Interestingly, one year after the temple was dedicated the *Democrat and Chronicle* ran one final article that gave an anniversary accounting of the temple. This article quoted from one of the counselors in the temple presidency, who reported everything was “performing wonderfully,” and “quite a few people from other parts of the country” had attended the temple. As a side note, it would have been fascinating for the author to have quoted from some of the local residents and businesses to get their reactions regarding the year since the dedication. This article was positive and received a +1.12 score.

The nine articles about the Palmyra New York Temple were as follows:

![The Palmyra New York Temple Articles](image)

Besides the one article that expressed concerns from the neighbors closest to the site, most of the non-members quoted were consistently very much in favor of the temple, and these nine articles averaged a +.91 score.

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Harrison New York Temple

The news that a temple would be built in Harrison, New York, broke in 1995, before the announcement of the smaller temple concept. In 1996, an article in the New York Times mentioned that the Latter-day Saints were waiting to break ground on the Harrison Temple. In fact, at that time, the Harrison New York, Boston Massachusetts, Billings Montana, and Nashville Tennessee Temples had all been announced, but work had not begun on any of them. Interestingly, each of these four temples experienced extreme opposition that delayed the projects for years. However, of these temples mentioned, the Harrison Temple is the only that has not yet been dedicated. In fact, as mentioned in the 1996 New York Times article, the ground has still not been broken nine years later (2005).

This first New York Times article focused on how fast the Church was growing in the nation and throughout the world, noting that one of the signs of growth was the number of temples being built. This article scored a +1.19.

Almost two years later, an article appeared that reported the status of the Harrison Temple, and it was one of the most contentious articles nationwide. Twelve town hall meetings had already taken place before this article was written. Generally, more coverage would be given to so much opposition, but, in this case, this was the first article printed about the problem. Both sides already had lawyers representing them in the meetings, and the reporter highlighted the contention between the two groups while writing the story. The neighbors took the first shot in the article, claiming that the Church had invited all the local members to arrive early and take all the seats, so that the

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12 The Harrison New York Temple was originally announced as the White Plains New York Temple, but the land later purchased for the temple was located four miles away from White Plains, New York, in Harrison, New York.
other side would have to stand. With a beginning like that, it was easy to see how far
down the road of contention these groups had progressed. The neighbors raised no new
concerns, but the manner in which they expressed the known concerns—steeple height,
traffic, home values, building size, lighting—was harsh. At one point in the meeting, the
Church lawyer said, “We’ve patiently been at this for 18 months. It’s time to get to it.”\footnote{13}
To which the opposing lawyer replied, “We don’t want this jammed down the throats of
my clients! For those of you who like immediate gratification, you won’t get it here.”\footnote{14}

Overall, this article scored a $-1.62$.

One year passed before another article surfaced, and this one was as negative as
the previous article. The reporter quoted mostly from the neighbors’ point of view,
stating that they had spent $250,000$ in legal fees to get the size of the building reduced. It
was also reported that the Church had lowered the steeple height and redesigned the
temple to be a little smaller, but not to the satisfaction of the neighbors. This article
scored a $-1.60$.

The next article that contained information about the Harrison Temple followed
the United States Congress’s passing of a bill that “acted to exempt religious institutions
from land-use rules.”\footnote{15} Interestingly, the bill was introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch, a
Latter-day Saint from Utah, and the article shared that “at least in the area of land use,
minority religions accounted for 49 percent of cases regarding the right to locate a
religious building at a given site.”\footnote{16} The article cited the Harrison Temple as an example
of a location where this bill could have an effect. The reporter did attempt to speak with

\footnote{14} Ibid.
\footnote{16} Ibid.
the Church concerning the Harrison Temple, but a Church spokesperson couldn’t comment at that time due to legal concerns. Instead, the article quoted neighbors who opposed the temple. It scored a −1.25.

Eight years after the announcement of the temple, a brief article was printed, which informed the public that the Harrison city officials had approved the temple plans, but the Church would not be given a construction permit until “a sewer main to serve the building could be built under the Hutchinson River Parkway,”17 and work on that had not yet begun. This article scored a +.20.

One month following the approval of the Harrison Temple plans, but pending the sewer line work, President Hinckley announced that the Church would build a Manhattan New York Temple just 26 miles from the Harrison Temple site. Since then, the Manhattan Temple has been built and dedicated. Some people wonder how the Manhattan Temple will affect the Church’s need for the Harrison Temple. A final article concerning the Harrison Temple stated the following:

Mark Bench, a former Scarsdale mayor who led the church in southern Westchester and the Bronx, said that some interest in the Harrison project has been transferred to the Manhattan temple. He said that smaller congregations might have trouble helping to staff two temples. But church members would ultimately be thrilled to have city and suburban temples, he said. The New York Temple is gorgeous,” said Bench, who is on the temple’s dedication committee. “The Harrison temple wasn’t happening, and we had been promised that there would be one in New York. Nothing’s been said, yes or no, about the (Harrison Temple). But they have a beautiful piece of property there. Why would they bother to do the sewer underneath if they weren’t planning to do something?”18

In other words, there was no official word at this time on the Harrison Temple, and it still appears on the Church’s official web-site as a planned temple. This final article scored a +.21.

Scores for the six articles concerning the Harrison New York Temple are shown below:

After the original announcement article, the newspaper basically covered the conflict. Although the reporters tried to cover both sides of the story, the overall tone was negative. Keeping in mind that the ground had not even been broken for this temple, the only thing these articles could focus on would be the controversy; therefore, the six articles averaged a −.48 score.

**Manhattan New York Temple**

The opening of the Manhattan New York Temple found its way into many newspapers throughout the United States. Besides articles appearing in the *New York Times* and the *New York Daily News*, there were articles in eight other newspapers from Seattle, Washington, to Washington D.C.

As seen in the previous section of this chapter, the stories of the Harrison Temple and the Manhattan Temple are interconnected. In fact, almost all of the articles printed in
New York papers mentioned both temples together. The *New York Times* began the Manhattan Temple coverage with an announcement article. It reviewed the "agonizingly" slow progress of the Harrison Temple, and proposed the Manhattan Temple as "somewhat of a solution to the slow pace."\(^{19}\) The article then focused on the unique way in which the Manhattan Temple would be built within an already existing building. This article scored a +.53.

Nothing more was written about the Manhattan Temple until the open house period arrived. The *New York Times* printed a media day article, but like many of the temple articles collected from New York City papers, the reporter tended to stray toward the sensational. For example, the reporter mentioned that Latter-day Saints performed baptisms for the dead for Jewish holocaust victims. Of course topics like polygamy, "Mormons" vs. Christianity, and even Joseph Smith's recorded impression of New York City in 1832 that, "the people had disagreeable countenances," all appeared in the article.\(^{20}\) Despite these topics, the author described the building itself favorably. This article received a +.60 score.

During the open house period for the Manhattan Temple, two interviews with members of the Church were printed. The *New York Daily News* interviewed two missionaries serving in New York City. The article opened with the elders knocking on a door, and records the "no, no, no" response from a lady on the other side. From there, the author reports the quantity of mission rules, the opening of the Manhattan Temple, and the difficulties of missionary work. One of the elders shared the following, "It is hard

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enough to convert Americans, with their high level of religious and secular education, misconceptions [about our religion] spawned by the Internet have made it even more difficult." Then the Elder explained a few of the many misconceptions he had heard while on his mission. This article scored a +.43. The second interview, which appeared in the *New York Times*, was with an area authority seventy. This time, the reporter tried to mainly focus on the leader's life, rather than to report much about the Church. The article discussed this man's upbringing in the Church and tried to show members of the Church as regular people. It scored a +.78.

The remaining nine articles printed about the Manhattan Temple were similar to each other, though they ran nationwide. Each discussed the unique design of the building and its uses, along with the theology connected to the temple. Most of the articles scored fairly close to each other, but in a few instances the reporters added personal positive or negative comments that caused the differences in the scores. The positive comments generally involved the reporter eloquently describing the interior of the temple, while the negative comments generally involved references to "Mormons" as non-Christian or negative comments about other temples being opposed.

The following chart shows how each of the articles about the Manhattan Temple scored:

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These 13 articles yielded a +.79 average.

**East Region Summary**

All of the three temples reviewed in the East Region received different newspaper coverage from each other. The following shows the average scores of the coverage:
The Palmyra New York Temple's coverage was typical in comparison with the coverage surrounding most other temples in the nation, the Harrison New York Temple's coverage focused on the controversy surrounding the approval and permits, and the Manhattan Temple's open house received the most national publicity of any temple in this study. The overall average for the region was +.41.
Latter-day Saint History in the Region

Historically, this region is significant because it houses the birthplaces of many of the early leaders of the Church: Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Oliver Cowdery. The Northeast Region consists of Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Early Church missionaries, such as Samuel H. Smith, Orson Pratt, Orson Hyde, Jared Carter, and Lyman Johnson, were the first to proselyte in this region, and their efforts proved fruitful. Many missionaries followed, but by 1850 the majority of the stalwart converts in three of these states—Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine—had migrated west. Following 1850, the largest gathering of Saints remaining in the East existed in Boston, Massachusetts, but eventually this group of 300 to 400 members also moved west. The first members to venture back into the region, surprisingly, were not missionaries, but young Latter-day Saints seeking education from the notable universities in the Boston area. Shortly thereafter, however, the Eastern States Mission was organized in 1893, and missionaries returned.¹

In 1905, the Church purchased the Vermont farm where Joseph Smith was born, erected a monument, and experimented with the farm as one of its first visitor's centers.

From these humble beginnings, although slow at first, membership increased in the region and each of the four states received their first stakes between 1962 and 1976: Massachusetts in 1962, Maine in 1968, New Hampshire in 1970, and Vermont in 1976.\(^2\)

Currently there is only one temple located in the area—the Boston Massachusetts Temple. It was dedicated in 2000, and constituted the 100\(^{th}\) dedicated temple of the Church.\(^3\)

**Massachusetts**

For years, the closet temple to this region was the Washington D.C. Temple, until the Toronto Ontario Canada Temple was dedicated in 1990. The continued need for temples in the region became apparent when a temple was originally announced to be built in Hartford, Connecticut. However, instead of building a temple in Hartford, the Church later announced that two temples would be built instead of one—in Harrison, New York and in Boston, Massachusetts.

**Boston Massachusetts Temple**

In all a total of 45 articles were published about the Boston Massachusetts Temple. So many articles were written because the controversy surrounding this temple was the worst of any in the nation. Everything began normally, with a typical announcement article in the *Boston Globe*, and a similar announcement article in the *Houston Chronicle*. Both of these articles received a +.90. A groundbreaking article appeared next, which was mostly positive until the end of the article when the reporter briefly mentioned that local residents were filing a suit against the height of the steeple.


\(^3\) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints website at [http://www.lds.org/temples/chronological](http://www.lds.org/temples/chronological).
This article scored a +.69. From there, the remaining articles focused on the feud between the Church and the neighbors.

The site selected for the temple was in Belmont, Massachusetts, an upper scale suburb of Boston. Although the better-known Boston Globe had already run an announcement article, the local Boston Temple Church committee felt it was important to have the local newspaper—the Belmont Citizen-Herald—announce the selected temple site as well. The committee drafted an article and hand delivered it to the editor of the Citizen-Herald. Unimpressed with the news, the editor did not run the article, and it was not until three weeks later when the committee pressed the editor as to why the initial article was not printed, that the editor printed a brief notice about the temple.\(^4\) With the wisdom of hindsight, one may wonder how things might have gone differently had the committee not pressed the editor to print something. The negative response was overwhelming. The eight public hearings that resulted “drew crowds as large as 700” people.\(^5\) The Church held fifty neighborhood meetings, at which the Church made concessions about the parking, lighting, and construction. The steeple height, which had not been mentioned in the fifty neighborhood meetings or in the eight public hearings, became a concern just as the public officials met to approve the project.\(^6\)

These officials restricted the Church to one spire and asked them to lower the building by one story, since the total height of the building was a concern for the city’s citizens.\(^7\) The Church agreed to this, but the neighbors were just beginning to fight.

\(^4\) Jack Thomas, “Belmont’s test of faith—Town debates size of Mormon Temple, but is that really the only issue,” Boston Globe, Dec. 5, 1996, Section D1.

\(^5\) Ibid.


\(^7\) Jack Thomas, “Belmont’s test of faith—Town debates size of Mormon Temple, but is that really the only issue,” Boston Globe, Dec. 5, 1996, Section D1.
Despite these considerable design alterations, six of the neighbors were not satisfied. They brought a lawsuit against the city of Belmont, arguing “that the town had violated its own special permitting authority and misapplied a special church exemption.”

Further compounding the problem, excavation work had already begun on the site, and to create level conditions for the foundation of the building, the Church had to blast part of the hill top away. One article reported that, while the blasting took place, “rocks and rubber debris rained down on neighboring houses and cars.” Accordingly, the blasting permit was pulled as the incident was inspected, and all work halted for a time. When a blasting permit was reissued with stricter requirements, the neighbors complained to the city that the noise from the backhoe equipment and the rock drills exceeded the “town’s noise bylaw.” The city reported that they were working with the contractor on the issue, but the neighbors did not feel it was enough. To compound all of these problems, a fire broke out at the construction site late one afternoon “after the workers had all left for the day.” The fire fighters did not detect any signs of arson and the construction firm was issued a hazard warning by the city.

As the blasting and noisy equipment continued, two articles reported that a major roadway would be closed at noon for 10 minutes everyday for two weeks. This was followed by a unique article that explained how the Church bought the home closest to

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the temple site because the homeowners had complained that the Church had ruined their home value and that the blasting was too nerve-wracking.\textsuperscript{13}

Amid the construction concerns, the lawsuit about the steeple’s height finally received a court date.\textsuperscript{14} But, before this case reached its date, three neighbors filed a second lawsuit challenging the “Dover Amendment,” which had been part of Massachusetts state law for more than fifty years. The Dover Amendment “grants non-profit schools and religious institutions the right to build on any parcel in the state—except in Boston and Cambridge—regardless of local land use restrictions.”\textsuperscript{15} The three neighbors contested that the Dover Amendment was discriminatory against such groups as atheists, and, therefore, should not be a state law.

A letter to the editor written by a member of the Church ran in the Boston Globe shortly following the filing of the second lawsuit and clearly explained what a mistake it was for these three people to challenge the Dover Amendment. This gentleman suggested that by attacking the Dover Amendment, the neighbors had “raised the stakes” and not only would face the “Mormon” Church, but also every religious group in the state because the Amendment affected them.\textsuperscript{16} Exactly what he predicted occurred, as many of the prominent religious groups in Massachusetts signed petitions in favor of the Church’s plans under the Dover Amendment.\textsuperscript{17}

The second suit was closed much sooner than the first when a District Court judge ruled the Dover Amendment legal, thereby proclaiming that the Mormon temple in its current location was legal.\textsuperscript{18} Again unsatisfied, the neighbors appealed, and one neighbor remarked that he hoped the Church would be asked to tear down what it had constructed to that point.\textsuperscript{19} This same neighbor also reported that some 100 people in the Belmont community had donated money to pay the $250,000 trial fees.\textsuperscript{20} The legal battle cost a lot of money on both sides, but the Church had to pay more than just legal fees. According to the building contract, the Church owed the contractor an amount of money each day the project was delayed past an agreed-upon date. As the date approached, the Church “filed an emergency motion requesting a speedy trial date.”\textsuperscript{21}

As the saga dragged on, many national newspapers ran articles explaining the conflict, and the potential ramifications of the Dover Amendment case for religious groups across the nation.

When the first lawsuit about the height of the steeple finally reached a judge, she ruled against the steeple saying, “While a spire might have inspirational value and may embody the Mormon value of ascendancy towards heaven, that is not a matter of religious doctrine and is not in any way related to the religious use of the temple.”\textsuperscript{22} The Church appealed the ruling. Once again, numerous religious groups united to back the

Church’s use of the steeple. Many ministers felt that although people might not attend a particular church, architectural steeples always caused people to look heavenward.23

Legal issues continued, and with the exception of the steeple, the Boston Temple was otherwise completed inside and out. President Hinckley decided to go ahead and dedicate the steeple-less temple, which was particularly significant as the Boston Temple was the 100th temple of the Church to be dedicated. As such, it represented the fulfillment of President Hinckley’s announced goal to have 100 temples by the end of 2000.24

For the most part, the media day article was positive. One non-Latter-day Saint Belmont resident who toured the temple stated, “It’s a beautiful building, and clearly an incredible amount of time and thought went into it.”25 However, the stubby top of the temple and the pending lawsuit still dominated the story. By this time, the three neighbors had appealed the Dover Amendment lawsuit all the way to the United States Supreme Court. Ironically, around the time this case came before the Supreme Court, Congress passed the Religious Land Use Act, and President Bill Clinton signed it.26 The Supreme Court upheld the initial judge’s ruling that the Dover Amendment was legal and refused to hear the case.27 A Boston Herald editorial touted the Supreme Court’s decision as a win for all religious groups in America.28

Shortly after the conclusion of this lawsuit, the steeple lawsuit came before the Massachusetts Supreme Court, and there the judges overturned the ruling that the steeple

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was not an important part of the religious experience. The ruling stated, “It is not for judges to determine whether the inclusion of a particular architectural feature is necessary for a particular religion.” Since the ruling, the Boston Massachusetts Temple has received its steeple.

Among articles surrounding the legal battles, one highlighted Dale Murphy’s conversion story and his call as the Boston Mission President. Another article covered an interview between a Boston Globe reporter and President Hinckley. In this article, President Hinckley expressed, “I don’t know why [the steeple] has become such a controversial thing; I can’t understand it.” Besides answering many questions about the Boston Temple and temple work, President Hinckley also answered other theological questions. One of these questions had to do with women receiving the priesthood, to which he answered, “I don’t know what's going to happen in the future, but insofar as I can see, no.” This comment moved two Latter-day Saint women to write a letter to the editor rebutting the comments of the prophet. Out of the forty-five articles collected concerning the Boston Temple, and with all the hatred, feuding, suing, mistakes, and turmoil surrounding the temple, this letter to the editor was the most negative toward the Church. It received the full -2.0 score, the only one for this temple.

Northeast Region Summary

Because the Boston Massachusetts Temple is the only temple in this region, the

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The summary of the articles will also be the summary for the region. The 45 articles were scored as follows:

The Boston Massachusetts Temple Articles

- Announcement #1: 0.9
- Announcement #2: 0.9
- Groundbreaking: 0.69
- Showdown: -1
- Showdown #2: -0.4
- City Council #1: 0

City Council #2: -0.5
City Council #3: -1.5
Blasting Accident: -1.5
Dale Murphy: 0.78
Construction Noise: -0.77
Construction Fire: -1.5

Traffic Problem #1: -0.5
Traffic Problem #2: -0.5
Church Buys Neighbor’s Home: 0.13
Law Suit #1: 0
Law Suit #2: 0
Editorial #1: 1
These articles averaged a \(-0.05\) score. As indicated, the reporters showed both sides of the story almost equally. Although the Supreme Court upheld the Dover Amendment, which might discourage future lawsuits against Latter-day Saint temples, and although the Boston Temple finally received its steeple, the negative coverage of this temple reached across the nation. It will most likely not quickly be forgotten in the Boston area. The Boston Temple, therefore, did not receive the favorable newspaper coverage most of the temples throughout the country did.
Chapter 9

Conclusion

After having read and scored 330 newspaper articles regarding the temples announced and dedicated between 1997 and 2004, the author noticed a few patterns and made some observations that are important to highlight before revealing the final national average score of the newspaper coverage given to temples during this period. The primary people who influenced article scores—as well as the temple's progress toward completion—were the following: reporters, public officials, and neighbors. Following are the details regarding these peoples' efforts with regard to temple building, as well as the Church's interactions with them, as evident in this study. After summarizing these influences, observations will then be offered about the Church avoiding common mistakes, members' responding to other faiths, and Church leaders choosing between larger- and smaller-sized temples. In conclusion, the evidence for my observations will be discussed using nationwide article score averages.

Reporters' Influence

In general, most reporters write newspaper articles in a professional manner. Professionalism means that the reporter sticks to facts, gives a balanced view of all sides of the story, and sets his or her opinions aside. Achieving a balanced view depends largely on the sources from which a reporter quotes. In this study regarding their temples, the Latter-day Saints are considered the subject's experts; therefore, it is understandable that many articles quote more from members of the Church than from non-members. In fact, in cities where temple plans proceeded smoothly and no controversies arose, local newspapers quoted almost solely from members of the Church. On the other hand, in
cities where opposition arose, reporters did more to present both sides of the story, which is the expected thing to do.

There were, however, instances throughout this study in which reporters overstepped the bounds of professionalism. One positive example is the reporter who wrote the Winter Quarters Nebraska Temple "media day" article, who chose to personalize the article by only sharing his own thoughts and feelings about the tour. His writing was persuasive and overly positive compared to other media day articles written. He summarized the experience as "serene," and then described the interior in such glowing terms as to entice the reader to visit the temple. He began, "If there were a doubting Thomas or two in the stream of visitors, nothing but respect was seen or heard." After beautifully detailing the baptistry, ordinance rooms, symbolism, and lighting, he then closed, "As you leave, one and all say once again, 'Thank you for coming.' There is mystery for some in the temple, but there is nothing but friendship on the premises." Taken out of context these comments might seem like mere observations, but this was not typical with other media day articles printed. A negative example of a reporter overstepping the bounds of professionalism occurred with a Columbus Dispatch reporter (Ohio). He wrote articles that focused on topics of controversy and persecution, and he quoted sources far removed from the temple and from the circumstances of the story. He set the tone for one of his articles in the opening sentence, "Throughout its history, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been dogged by misunderstanding and

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
suspicion.” The remainder of the article sensationalized different aspects of the Church’s past.

These positive and negative examples, however, were not typical. The majority of reporters remained highly professional throughout their articles. In large measure, credit for such professionalism is due to the Church itself, which readily provided statistical information, construction and open house information, pictures of the temple’s interior, and answers to frequently asked questions for media resources. The Church, likewise, provided this same information for local Church spokespersons to assist them in answering the media’s questions. Such organizational effort often resulted in more positive articles printed nationally.

Public Officials’ Influence

Another pattern that emerged from the articles was evidence of public officials’ power to speed, slow, change, or deny the building of temples. There were numerous cities in which, when the public found out about a Latter-day Saint temple being built, concerns were raised about the size, lighting, height, use, traffic, color, and environmental effects of the building. However, whether these concerns and complaints had significant impact on the temple project was entirely up to public officials. In some instances in this study, public officials hardly reacted to concerns raised by members of the community, while in other cities public officials delayed temple projects for months at a time to handle these concerns.

For example, Albuquerque public officials listened carefully to both those in favor and those opposed to the Albuquerque New Mexico Temple, made recommendations,

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and then moved the project speedily forward even when an agreement regarding the final height of the steeple had not been reached. Another example of public officials approving a project quickly despite public opposition occurred in Sacramento, California. There, public officials refuted every concern raised by a few members of the community without the Church ever having to defend itself.

Two of the strongest examples on the other side of the spectrum were from Billings, Montana, and Nashville, Tennessee. In the case of the Billings Temple, one public official asked "for clarification, making it clear that a 'no' vote would still give the church plenty of time to resubmit its annexation request." In other words, his dissenting vote did not stop the project entirely, but just delayed it for a period of 19 months. In the end, the only change to the project was a request for the Church to decrease the wattage of the lights. Ironically, every article on the Billings Temple reported that those in favor of the temple out-numbered the opposition three to one in public meetings. So, despite the majority of the community supporting the project, it was delayed for 19 months just to ask for lower wattage lighting. In the case of the Nashville Tennessee Temple, after the Forest Hill's public officials rejected the Church's second request—which met every requirement the city had suggested in the first request—one of the city's own council members openly admitted that the other members of the council who voted against the project were concerned about more than just traffic and lighting. In fact, he said, these issues were just "red herrings" to the real issue that they simply did not want the temple in the city.6


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As with media relations, the Church has shown itself prepared, organized, and professional in dealing with public officials. Prior to approaching public officials, Church officials research a city's zoning laws, read recorded city objectives, study public officials' voting tendencies, and discover which potential locations would prove to be least problematic, thereby cutting down on opposition and negative publicity, and saving time and money in the long run. All of these efforts help in developing positive relations with public officials. In spite of this, delays develop. When opposition arises with regards to public projects, public officials are obligated to hear all sides before they approve or reject a project. As gathered from the articles, delays and changes imposed on the temples built during this period were approved in an attitude of compromise and fairness. However, as evident in the case of the Nashville Tennessee Temple, sometimes the public officials' personal agendas influenced their votes in spite of the community's support for the project. As a result of this, great wisdom is seen in the Church's First Presidency's plea, "we strongly urge men and women to be willing to serve on school boards, city and county councils and commissions, state legislatures, and other high offices of either election or appointment, including involvement in the political party of their choice."^7 Church member participation in civic circles would not only offer networks of trusted relationships within committees and councils, but members could also help in moving good things forward, such as temple projects. In all, the Church's current efforts with public officials build relationships of trust, friendship, and understanding, and each of these efforts lends to more positive reporting within national newspapers.

Neighbors' Influence

As became evident in many articles across the nation, the Church made significant endeavors to provide information for the public in communities where a temple was to be built. Particular efforts were made on behalf of neighbors closest to the temple to help alleviate the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) concern. These efforts included local Church members opening their homes for neighborhood meetings discussing the Church’s theology with regard to temples. Handouts were distributed, and opportunities to answer questions were provided. In some instances, these meetings helped to win over some of the community’s loudest supporters for the temple, as was the case with the Houston Texas Temple. One neighbor explained to a reporter, “I appreciated their openness about what was going to be part of our neighborhood and community.” Another neighbor added, “I think it was extremely smart of them to keep everyone informed.” All of these neighbors reported that they had toured the temple two or more times, and each time they took family and friends with them. Comments like this show the importance and effectiveness of the Church’s organized efforts toward the neighbors and community.

Similar efforts were made throughout the nation. In Nauvoo, Illinois, a special “Neighbor’s Day” open house was organized before the big rush of national visitors occurred. The community received this well, and many positive comments were reported.

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9 Ibid.
in the papers. In another instance, the *Albuquerque Tribune* reported that the Church and the neighborhood association “praised each other as open and cooperative.”

Despite these labors to create understanding, those who are looking for problems will find them even from these community efforts, as was evident with the Harrison New York Temple. The *New York Times* reported that one neighbor felt deceived by the information presented from the Church. She claimed the local bishop had shown her a picture of a small temple, when in reality a 96,000 square foot temple was what the Church wanted to build. In another instance, neighbors in Reno, Nevada, reported, “We were ‘deceived’ by church officials who agreed in neighborhood meetings to lower light levels after 9:30 p.m.” However, these two examples represent the only negative comments resulting from neighborhood meetings printed in newspapers, which implies that these meetings were far more productive than counter productive.

Therefore, it can be concluded that reaching out to the community and the neighbors generally results in positive outcomes. We also learn that it is important for Church members to present information about temples with a “we have nothing to hide, and we would love to answer any question or concern you may have” attitude.

**Suggestions for Future Temple Building**

After reading the articles collected, three avoidable problems caused by Church members’ actions stood out, and can therefore serve as helpful reminders of what to avoid in the future. These are 1) statements about the Church’s willingness or unwillingness to change a temple’s design, 2) incorrectly announcing information, and 3)
Church spokesmen making statements anonymously. In the first situation, the *Los Angeles Times* reported the sentiment shared by the local stake president over the community’s hope that the design of the Newport Beach Temple would be changed, “Only the church’s president, who is considered a prophet, can approve a temple’s design. . . . And any city mandate that changes the temple’s architecture is seen by the 11-million member church as an infringement on its religious beliefs and a contradiction of God’s design”12 (emphasis added). The stake president further stated, “Although the city may not share the belief that [the church president] has the divine mandate to do this, we trust that you will respect the fact that church members do believe it.”13 In defense of this stake president, sometimes statements are quoted out of context, which may be the case here, but these comments made the Church appear nonnegotiable. When the Church did make adjustments to reach compromise, the papers reported that the community was shocked that “God’s design” could and would be changed. Although we assume that this stake president was trying to do his best, the stance he took was problematic, as is evident in the Church’s willingness to negotiate many temples’ designs. Unfortunately, this comment created a great deal of mistrust toward the Church in this community.

A second problem was the impatience or miscommunication on the part of someone in announcing the groundbreaking of the Birmingham Alabama Temple. The first groundbreaking article came 10 months prematurely, and it announced the wrong site for the temple. This resulted in the *Birmingham News*’ printing another front-page article that highlighted the Church’s mistake, making the Church appear disorganized and unprofessional.

13 Ibid.
Another unprofessional display on the part of an individual was evident in comments offered by the Church’s spokesman in Reno, Nevada. In this instance, he discussed issues and released information before he was authorized to do so, and therefore asked to remain anonymous in the article. The Church has nothing to hide, and the fact that a Church spokesperson would ask to remain anonymous casts an element of deceit and secrecy, which approach does not facilitate trusting relations with the community.

Aside from these three examples, it is far more apparent that the majority of the time the packets, checklists, guidance, surveys, research, programs, and systems already in place in the Church work in harmony to produce consistently outstanding results. But these three examples may be shared as reminders for Church representatives in future cities selected to receive a temple.

Responding to Other Faiths

Another group in the community—the Church’s friends of other faiths— deserves separate analysis. As expected, members of other faiths had various responses to the Latter-day Saint temples built between 1997 and 2004. Some responses were favorable while others were not, depending on how relationships were developed.

Ex-members of the Church, who traveled great distances to spread their negative message, ran most anti-“Mormon” responses to temples. Some newspapers reported a community church’s sponsorship of an anti-“Mormon” seminar just prior to or during a temple open house. Such reports were found in Spokane, Washington; Medford, Oregon; Nashville, Tennessee; Birmingham, Alabama; Nauvoo, Illinois; and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma newspapers. Interestingly, all of these articles generated responses from other
non-Latter-day Saint members of the community defending the Church. It was also interesting to find that religious opposition was not confined to certain regions, but rather scattered around the nation, as is shown in the diagram below:

On the other hand, some cities reported only favorable responses from members of other denominations. This was the case in Kona, Hawaii, and Detroit, Michigan, as ministers of other faiths commented positively on their tours of the temple. Further, in
Boston, Massachusetts, many religious groups rallied in support of the Church in favor of upholding the Dover Amendment, and the right to have a steeple.

There probably always will be members of other faiths who will persecute and others who will defend the Church, but the Church can do much to strengthen relations with other religious groups. In the six cities where religious opposition was reported, it was common for reporters to seek the Church’s response. One of the most persistent anti-“Mormon” campaigns in this study occurred in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; however, within this case was a good example of a stake president’s response: “As for the specific allegations made, we believe it would be un-Christian to comment other than to say that Jesus Christ is the center of our church, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and that the missionaries go out for two years, supporting themselves, and explain to everyone willing to hear the message of Jesus Christ.” All of his comments simply refuted the opposition’s claims, and didn’t attack any particular statement or group specifically. His response is typical of how most spokespersons responded.

All this being said, newspapers in the vast majority of the cities in which a temple was built during this period contained no information containing religious opposition.

Choosing Between Larger- and Smaller-Sized Temples

A final observation that surfaced while conducting this research was the fact that temples larger in size (greater than 20,000 sq. ft.), and located on land that needed rezoning had longer delays than either smaller temples (less than 20,000 sq. ft.) or those on land that didn’t need to be rezoned. In fact, all of the temples announced before the smaller temple concept was revealed, that also fell within the period of this study (1997-2004), were delayed for significant periods of time. These included the Billings Montana

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Temple, Boston Massachusetts Temple, the original Nashville Tennessee Temple, and the Harrison New York Temple. Interestingly, these four temples, and the temples that were built because of such delays, account for nearly 40% of the newspaper articles gathered for this study. The only exception to this pattern has been the Newport Beach Temple, which, although smaller in size, was delayed for a significant period of time. Therefore, it appears that President Hinckley’s revelation on small temples not only made it possible for the Church to afford to build more temples, but also helped alleviate much of the negative reaction, publicity, and delays associated with building Latter-day Saint temples in the United States.

Most of the temples built since the smaller temple revelation fall somewhere between 10,000 to 20,000 square feet in size. Although the Houston Texas and Albuquerque New Mexico Temples are larger than 20,000 square feet, these two temples did not experience the opposition that the other four did because the cities’ land use guidelines for these sites did not need to be adjusted. Therefore, there was little that could delay the projects. Evidently, larger-sized temples on land that needed to be rezoned received the longest delays in receiving public official approval, and many times this approval only came after the Church conceded to lower the square footage of the building.

**Overall Scoring of the Nation’s Newspaper Coverage**

In this section, the scoring of newspaper articles regionally will be compared in order to make final observations regarding the public’s response to small temple building. In order to summarize the nation’s overall newspaper coverage, the Cowan scale introduced at the beginning of this work will be reviewed.
The Midwest Region scored the highest overall. This score was high because the positive comments from the communities, reporters, and members of other faiths far outnumbered and out-weighed the few negative comments and anti-“Mormon” articles printed the region.

Similarly, the Southwest Region also scored high because of positive comments from neighbors in Houston and Albuquerque. Only the Oklahoman reported strong opposition, but this paper fairly reported both sides of the story, and the scores balanced each other. Interestingly, neither of these regions contained any temples that were delayed by public officials, while each of the other regions did.

The Southeast Region scored the third highest, despite the public officials’ denial of the project and the legal problems in Nashville, Tennessee, the mistaken announcement, and anti-“Mormon” efforts in Birmingham, Alabama. In fact, the
reporters in this region often shared their surprise at how strong the Church’s growth was in this “Bible Belt” region.

The West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska Region reported a lot of structural opposition against the California temples—especially the Newport Beach Temple—and religious opposition in Washington and Oregon. However, scores were very positive in Hawaii and Alaska.

The Mountain West Region also offered elements of structural opposition to temples in Billings and Reno, but no religious opposition was reported. The newspapers’ reporting of the opposition in these communities was well balanced, and the Snowflake Temple’s extremely positive coverage only helped raise the region’s score.

The East Region’s score was strongly affected by the negative publicity surrounding the Harrison New York Temple. Part of the negative publicity about this temple found its way into the Manhattan Temple articles because the stories of these two temples were so intertwined. The positive tenor of the Palmyra Temple articles helped raise the region’s scores.

The Northeast Region, which contains only the Boston Temple, scored the lowest in the nation. According to the Cowan scale, this region fell within the “balanced” range, which shows that the articles were fair in presenting both sides of the story.

Overall, the nation’s average score for newspaper reporting was a +.66, and the Cowan scale designates this number as “favorable” toward the Church and its temples. For the most part, reporters in the nation were professional in their writing, and the sources they quoted were fair and reasonable. It is evident that the Church has come a
long way “out of obscurity,”¹⁵ and is far from the temple site abandonment days of Missouri in the 1830s. Though there are still religious, structural, and legal battles to fight in the course of temple construction, it seems that any great cause experiences opposition. As far as future temple building is concerned, following the great building boom of 1999 and 2000, President Hinckley promised:

The great work of temple building goes on throughout the world. We will keep on working to bring the temples to the people, making it more convenient for Latter-day Saints everywhere to receive the blessings which can only be had in these holy houses. . . . In addition, we have visited and are giving consideration to a significant number of potential temple sites in the United States, Central and South America, Europe, and the isles of the sea. I will not mention their names because this would only create excitement when we do not yet have the ground on which to build them. The construction of each temple represents a maturing of the Church. We will continue to build these sacred houses of the Lord as rapidly as energy and resources allow.¹⁶

¹⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 1:30.
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