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Mormons

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The Mormons are perhaps the only American ethnic group whose principal migration began as an effort to move out of the United States. Moreover, this migration of the main body of Mormons from western Illinois to the Rocky Mountains in the late 1840s imprinted upon the group a self-consciousness gained through prior experience in the Midwest. The Mormons have been influenced subsequently by ritual tales of privation, wandering, and delivery under God's hand, precisely as the Jews have been influenced by their stories of the Exodus. A significant consequence of this tradition has been the development of an enduring sense of territoriality that has given a distinctive cast to Mormon group consciousness. It differentiates the Mormons from members of other sects and lends support to the judgment of the sociologist Thomas F. O'Dea that the Mormons "represent the clearest example to be found in our national history of the evolution of a native and indigenously developed ethnic minority."

Origins

The Mormons are the product of a religious movement begun in 1830 by Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–44), third son in an upstate New York farming family. Disturbed by the competing claims of various churches to divine favor, Smith in 1820 prayed for guidance. The ensuing religious experiences reported by Smith served to unify his own family and those of his friends in a new faith seen by his followers as a "restoration" of primitive Christianity in preparation for the return of the Savior. Within a short time Smith had gone beyond the millennialist and restorationist concerns of such contemporaries as William C. Miller and Alexander Campbell. He claimed that as part of his prophetic mission he had been instructed to restore "all things," by which he meant God's most significant communications to people, from all previous

Judeo-Christian revelatory epochs or “dispensations.” In maintaining that Christ’s earthly ministry was pivotal but not an all-encompassing or final revelatory epoch, Smith made himself a pariah among the divines of restorationist and millennialist sects.

Smith began to draw heavily from the Old Testament and over the next several years instituted the building of temples, an elaborate temple ritual, the practice of plural marriage (technically polygyny, but commonly referred to as polygamy), and a series of related doctrines and practices. He drew also from precedents in the Book of Mormon, an additional book of Scriptures he claimed to have translated from records inscribed on goldlike plates provided by an angel, which described the religious history of a pre-Columbian group of New World Christians. For the rest of his life Smith endeavored to build the disparate thousands who became his followers into a unified, orderly, covenanted society. He taught that the Latter-day Saints, as they called themselves, were a people whose special relationship to God through their prophets would prepare them for a unique and critical role in the Christian eschatological scheme. Smith’s early followers seemed to be seeking within the authoritarian structure and social order of the prophet’s revealed religion a haven from the chaotic and centrifugal tendencies they saw about them in Jacksonian America. Profoundly attracted to the liberal, republican ideologies of antebellum America, they nonetheless feared the social consequences of such ideologies and sought refuge in Mormonism.

The Midwest Migrations

Smith’s earliest activities as a religious leader took place near his parents’ home in Manchester Township, New York, and the home of his parents-in-law near Harmony in north-central Pennsylvania. The Book of Mormon was printed in Palmyra, New York, in the early spring of 1830, and on 6 April of that year Smith and a few friends formally incorporated as the Church of Christ (changed in 1838 to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).

Four of Smith’s disciples undertook the first major missionary journey in the fall of 1830. Traveling through newly settled farming areas in northeastern Ohio, they preached to several congregations of Alexander Campbell’s followers and attracted more than one hundred converts, including an important minister, Sidney Rigdon (1793–1876). Within a short time there were more followers of the new faith in Ohio than in New York. In December 1830 Smith announced a revelation commanding the New York congregations to migrate to Ohio. (Smith’s revelations, often recorded verbatim, were regarded by him-

self and his followers as direct communications from God.) This first Mormon migration, of perhaps seventy persons, was accomplished in the early months of 1831. The region around Kirtland, Ohio, a few miles east of Cleveland, became a major center of Mormon activity for the next seven years; the prophet himself resided there during most of the period.

Smith made it clear as early as February 1831, however, that the Ohio settlements were staging areas for a more important migration to a site he would designate as “Zion” or “The New Jerusalem,” which was to be a millennial administrative center. Revelations in July 1831 named Jackson County, Missouri, which encompasses present-day Kansas City, then America’s westernmost frontier, as the place where the Saints were to “gather.” Migration and the purchase of land in Missouri began immediately.

Mormons gathering to Missouri from all parts of the country were asked to enter into a communal order called Consecration and Stewardship. Their different social values and rapidly increasing numbers quickly caused concern among earlier, non-Mormon Missouri settlers. The Mormons—almost all New Englanders, clannish, communal, and generally opposed to slavery—threatened to take over an area previously pioneered by migrants from the hill countries of Tennessee and Kentucky. The pro-slavery earlier settlers, unsuccessful in legal attempts to dislodge the newcomers, resorted to mob action in July 1833. They destroyed the Mormon press and threatened further violence if the Saints did not leave the country. By October the mob made good its threats; twelve hundred or more Mormons fled northward across Missouri into Clay County. In 1836 they were asked to move again and reached an informal agreement that a new county, Caldwell, would be created in which they could settle.

Mormons settled in considerable numbers in Caldwell County and built a capital city, Far West, which by 1838 had an estimated population of five thousand. Early in that year the Kirtland Saints arrived; they had fled the Ohio center because of financial difficulties and bitter feelings arising from the failure of a bank sponsored by Mormon leaders. By autumn political differences between Mormons and non-Mormons in Missouri led to mutual distrust and hostility and in October the governor ordered that the Mormons be “exterminated or driven from the state.” After numerous confrontations and several dozen deaths, Smith and a few close friends were taken into custody, and mobs once again moved into Mormon settlements. This time the Saints fled northeastward into Iowa and Illinois.

Smith escaped from prison in April and found his followers in Illinois gathering near an undeveloped tract of land called Commerce. The Mormons renamed the site Nauvoo and began immediately to build a city. Under a liberal

charter and fed by a stream of immigrants converted through remarkably successful missionary efforts in England, Canada, and the United States, Nauvoo grew rapidly. In 1844 secret plans were laid for establishing a political kingdom of God, to be governed by a Council of Fifty which would include some non-Mormons and would be responsible for civil and temporal affairs generally. Early that same year Smith, unable in conscience to support either Henry Clay or James K. Polk for the U.S. presidency, declared himself a candidate. By that time, however, dissension between Mormons and non-Mormons was rising, stirred by apostates offended by the clandestine introduction in the early 1840s of the practice of plural marriage. In June Smith was taken into custody. On 27 June an armed mob broke into the Carthage, Illinois, jail where Smith was confined and killed him and his brother.

The Exodus

The ensuing struggle for succession led to considerable splintering, but Brigham Young (1801–77), president of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, quickly gained the confidence of most of Smith's followers and assumed leadership of the church. However, the prophet's death did not resolve the basic differences between Mormons and non-Mormons in western Illinois. By February 1846 relations between the two groups had become so critical that abandonment of Nauvoo could no longer be delayed. The Mormons, feeling that U.S. officials had failed to protect their constitutional rights, began to organize wagon trains and cross the Mississippi westward into Iowa.

Variouly estimated at between ten thousand and fifteen thousand people, the group moved across Iowa, settling temporarily along the Missouri in the present Omaha and Council Bluffs area. In the spring of 1847 migration began to an area then known as Upper California in Mexican Territory. Pioneer trains arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in late July. Some months later, in February 1848, the new homesite became part of the United States through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Subsequent migration brought most of the refugees from Missouri to the Great Basin by 1852. Mormon converts from Europe and North America continued to follow the same route overland until 1869, after which time most traveled by rail.

Tales of "the exodus" or "the trek" occupy a large place in Mormon folk tradition. Whether or not their ancestors were involved in the migration, most Mormons can recall stories of sacrifice and heroism associated with the experience. Although the eight-hundred-mile overland journey was arduous, the Mormons probably suffered a lower mortality than non-Mormon companies

making the same trip, because from the outset their migration was well planned to minimize hazards. Brigham Young announced a revelation in January 1847 that commanded organization of the "Camps of Israel" into groups of ten, fifty, and one hundred wagons supervised by appointed captains at each level, a pattern paralleling that of the ancient Israelites and followed in most subsequent Mormon migrations. Farm implements, seeds, tree cuttings, and other necessities for successful colonization were included among the supplies. Poor families were distributed among the trains so that a number of the better provided would be able to share responsibility for their well-being.

Transporting the residents of the Missouri River settlements to the Great Basin severely taxed the Mormons' resources but did not prevent church leaders from setting up at the same time an elaborate system for bringing European converts to the newfound Zion. Most European immigrants sailed from Liverpool on ships chartered by the church. In the United States, Mormon agents were stationed at port cities and along the overland route to make arrangements each season for transportation of complete immigrant companies to Salt Lake City. In the late 1860s, as the Transcontinental Railroad extended westward, church teams were sent to the railhead to escort the immigrants to the Mormon capital. Church officials assumed responsibility for placing new immigrants in temporary homes and jobs until permanent settlement could be arranged. Completion of the railroad in 1869 eased the logistical problems of transporting immigrants to Utah and greatly changed the nature of the migration and its impact upon its participants.

Through the Perpetual Emigrating Fund the church contributed considerably to the costs as well as the logistics of migration. This revolving fund was established in 1850 and continued in use until 1887 when the federal government, during an antipolygamy campaign, revoked the church's charter and seized its assets. During its nearly forty years of operation the fund directly assisted some 50,000 European immigrants. Movement from the areas of Mormon mission activity occurred in distinct phases, paralleling the general migration to the United States from those same areas. Emigration from England, Scotland, and Wales began shortly after the first Mormon mission to England in 1837 and remained fairly strong throughout the rest of the century. Scandinavian emigration began in the 1850s, reached large numbers in the 1860s, and remained strong through the 1880s. Mormon missionaries of the period traveled through most of Europe, Asia, and Oceania but were most successful in Protestant countries, especially the British Isles, Scandinavia, and Germany. Total Mormon emigration from these areas up to 1957 is estimated at some 54,000 from Great Britain, 28,041 from Scandinavia, and 13,755 from

Germany. Since the nineteenth-century missionaries urged their European converts to gather to Zion, the resultant emigration caused local congregations to be unstable and impermanent. Most European Mormons of the period accepted fully the spirit of a contemporary Mormon hymn, "Oh Babylon, Oh Babylon, we bid thee farewell, / We're going to the mountains of Ephraim to dwell."

Settlement in the Great Basin

To these many thousands, dwelling amidst the mountains of Ephraim was far less pleasant in fact than it had been in prospect. The Great Basin was isolated, eight hundred miles in either direction from the nearest settlements. The high cost of imported goods made self-sufficiency a necessary goal, but the environment did not favor such an effort. Timber was scarce, the annual rainfall averaged only twelve to fifteen inches, there was little arable land, and much of the area was inhabited by Shoshonean-speaking Indians. The most promising valleys of the region stretched along the western edge of the Wasatch Mountains, which run north and south through the middle of what is now Utah. Rising abruptly several thousand feet above the valley floors, they trap winter snows and distribute them evenly during the summer along a network of small rivers and streams—a system ideally suited to irrigated agriculture.

Colonization spread from the Salt Lake Valley to low valleys lying northward as far as Brigham City and southward to the subtropical region around present-day St. George. Outlying colonies were founded in the early 1850s in San Bernardino, California; Las Vegas and Carson Valley, Nevada; and on the Salmon River in Idaho. But most of these settlements faltered for various reasons; those still viable in 1857 were abandoned and their inhabitants recalled when a federal army was sent to quell an alleged uprising among the Mormons and install the territory's first non-Mormon governor. Despite such setbacks the population grew rapidly, increasing from 11,000 in 1850 to 41,000 in 1860 and 87,000 in 1870. As the early sites filled and began to strain the resources of the immediate environment, higher mountain valleys were settled until, beginning in the 1870s, it became necessary to send colonizing missions to Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and Wyoming, as well as Alberta, Canada, and Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico. The normal pattern was to found a central town under church "call" and direction that then served as a base for the settlement of satellite villages. The last church-sponsored migration, beginning in 1900, was to the Big Horn Basin in northern Wyoming.

As Mormons colonized area after area, they developed a pattern of settlement

that was replicated in nearly every colonization venture through the turn of the century. When the Mormons planned a colonizing mission, church authorities "called" specific families to participate in the venture, making certain that the group included people who possessed the skills and trades necessary to the colony's success. Church and often civil government for the new location were organized before departure (the two were in fact nearly indistinguishable). Leaders planned and organized the supplies and equipment, and the whole company departed on a prearranged date from a designated staging site. Once the colonists reached the new territory, they immediately began to survey and lay out the town and the farm plots, which, following instructions Joseph Smith had given in 1833, were outside of town. Thereafter, the colonists did their private work (the plowing of individual parcels or building a home) during time left from assigned public work—the building of canals, mills, fences, churches, and schools. After this initial planting, smaller towns were founded in the vicinity on a more individualistic basis. The physiognomy of Mormon towns was remarkably uniform because of the need to find land, water, and timber nearby and because the same layout and planning procedure were used in founding both "called" and spontaneously settled towns.

The practice of living within the town and farming outside it, rarely seen in the United States outside New England and Spanish-settled areas, fostered an intense social and religious life. The strong communal sentiment of the town-folk was reinforced by doctrines contained in Smith's revelations and by deliberate church policy. Many of these towns remained only slightly altered until the 1920s, their traditional pattern of life established and reinforced over three generations. The western Mormon towns nurtured a provincial and religious self-consciousness into an incipient ethnicity.

Almost from its initial settlement, the limited resources of any one locality encouraged further migration of those forming new families. In the twentieth century, however, the direction of this movement shifted from founding new agricultural towns to further populating the urban centers of Salt Lake City, Provo, and Ogden. In the 1930s and 1940s there was also substantial migration to cities in neighboring states, especially California. Nonetheless the proportion of Mormons in Utah's population continued to grow, aided by the return migration of the 1960s and 1970s and a continuing high birthrate. Mormons made up 56 percent of the Utah population in 1920 and 72 percent in 1970. Mormon settlement did not observe state lines. One authority has coined the term "Deseret Mormons" for the central body of Mormons raised in those areas of the West where Mormon influence predominates—primarily Utah; much of southeastern Idaho; Star Valley, the Bear River Valley, and the Big Horn Ba-

sin in Wyoming; the San Luis Valley in Colorado; the Ramah Valley in New Mexico; the Little Colorado River Valley in northern Arizona and certain towns in the Salt and Gila River valleys; a few towns in Chihuahua and Sonora, Mexico; extensive parts of southern Alberta, Canada; and a few localities in Washington, Oregon, and California. Deseret was the Mormon name for the state planned by Brigham Young shortly after the Mormons settled in the Great Basin, an entity much larger than the present boundaries of Utah.

During the nineteenth century, European converts to Mormonism were expected to leave their homeland and go to Deseret, where they were utterly dependent upon the Utah church leaders for both temporal and spiritual guidance. Under these circumstances the immigrants rapidly assimilated and use of their native languages soon died out. An early Mormon apostle expressed this rapid assimilation as an avowed aim of church leaders. After visiting a settlement where ethnic differences seemed to be inhibiting the development of a native iron industry in 1852, he reported: "We found a Scotch party, a Welch party, an English party, and an American party and we turned Iron Masters and undertook to put all these parties through the furnace, and run out a party of Saints for building up the Kingdom of God."

Brigham Young, in his efforts to counter the appeal of California in the 1840s, spoke of the Great Basin as a "good place to make Saints." He referred not just to the growth of piety, but to the development of a people sufficiently distinct in values and traditions from other Americans to be regarded as a separate nation; he even went so far as to encourage the development and use of a new alphabet to facilitate written communication among Saints and widen the gulf between Deseret and the rest of America. The present distinctiveness of the Mormon core or culture region suggests that Brigham Young succeeded in this effort better than he might have expected. In the twentieth century, however, rapid growth outside the Deseret area has caused some observers to suggest that Mormon distinctiveness may eventually be lost through too great a geographic diffusion. Certainly there are gradations in the degree to which members of the church are imbued with the Mormon culture, but several factors seem to favor perpetuation of Deseret influence over the entire church membership for the foreseeable future. There were almost 4 million Mormons throughout the world in 1977; of these, over 1.4 million (36 percent) were from Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, and New Mexico. This substantial minority exercises a commanding influence upon the church and church members elsewhere in the world.

Deseret Mormons are almost always agents in conversion to Mormonism, a process which in most cases results in the converts' abandoning old social re-

lations and forming new ones within the church; converts are cut off from old values and historical roots and establish new ones within the context of the newly acquired religion. Throughout this process Deseret Mormons are the dominant role models. The missionaries who encourage conversion, the presidents of mission areas, and the central church leaders who visit the missions periodically are for the most part Deseret Mormons. The voice of the predominantly Utah-born central church leadership—the “general authorities,” as they are known to church members—seems to strike at least as strong a resonance in mission areas as it does in Deseret. The degree to which an individual participates in Mormon culture is influenced partly by length of membership in the church but is affected more strongly by the amount of interaction with other Mormons. Interaction in turn is determined primarily by commitment to the church and activity in its various programs. Nonparticipating Salt Lake City Mormons are often less acculturated than recent Nashville converts. Although it was formed in a particular region by particular circumstances, Mormon society is constantly being revitalized in mission areas.

Not all followers of Joseph Smith shared in the Utah experience. At the time of the founder's death several splinter groups formed, some of which still exist, most with only a few members. In the 1850s followers of several such groups began to unite as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The prophet's widow Emma and her family had not moved West and Smith's descendants became the leaders of the “Reorganization.” As the historian Jan Shipps has noted, Latter-day Saints who joined the Reorganization were attracted more by the Christian primitivism in Smith's teachings than by the neo-Judaic Christianity evidenced in temple rituals, polygamy, and the political kingdom concept. Because they did not participate in the exodus west and escaped the traumatic experiences of the pioneer Utah period, the membership of the Reorganized church is culturally less distinctive than that of the Utah church. Now centered in Missouri, the church has over 213,000 members.

Mormon Culture

Rapid assimilation of ethnic groups entering the Mormon Zion has led to considerable uniformity in cultural expression. European immigrants were not moving out of their old life into relative freedom, as happened elsewhere in the American West, but rather into tightly structured, hierarchical, closely knit villages where pressures to conform were great. Anti-Mormon writers of the nineteenth century saw Mormon society as a form of oriental despotism, and although most Mormons, then as now, voluntarily accepted the pervasive in-

fluence of the church in their lives, critics quite rightly saw the system as alien to the more liberal and individualistic forms of social organization prevailing elsewhere in America. Most forms of creative expression were sponsored by the church, related to religion, and stressed group rather than individual achievement. Even in contemporary Mormon society there is discernibly greater emphasis on the performing arts than on the visual arts. There is widespread emphasis on group singing, in choirs and in congregations; the well-known Mormon Tabernacle Choir is a great source of local pride and the epitome of Mormon cultural expression. Musical ensembles, especially bands, have been widespread among the Mormons since the mid-nineteenth century. The brass bands that were used to encourage members of immigrant trains crossing the plains became a symbol of determination and cheerfulness in the face of hardship. Musical training programs begin early in Utah public schools and are well developed in high school curriculums.

Plays and theatrical productions have also been a favorite cultural activity of the Mormons. The Salt Lake Theater, built in 1861, was long the center of drama in the Rocky Mountain West, a source of so much community pride that Salt Lake City now boasts two replicas of the original structure. The church continues to sponsor theatrical productions by the youth of each congregation and until the 1980s subsidized the Promised Valley Playhouse in downtown Salt Lake City. Church members in several areas produce extravagant pageants depicting the Mormon past. The most famous is the pageant at the Hill Cumorah near Palmyra, New York, reported by Joseph Smith as the site where he acquired the records from which the Book of Mormon was translated. As of 1980 Salt Lake City supported six professional theater companies, an impressive number for a metropolitan area of five hundred thousand people. Dancing has also been popular since the nineteenth century both as a social activity and as a form of creative expression. The city's five dance companies have made Utah a center for dance in the West. Ballet West and the Utah Repertory Dance Theater have national reputations for excellence.

More individualistic forms of creative expression have not received the widespread support given to performing arts. Mormon painters have produced numerous portraits of church leaders, murals to decorate the interiors of temples and churches, and traveling shows to illustrate church history. Representational painting has been patronized almost to the exclusion of abstract art. There are four notable public galleries in all of Utah: the Utah Museum of Fine Arts on the University of Utah campus in Salt Lake City, the Salt Lake Art Center, the Museum of Art on the Brigham Young University campus, and the

Springville Art Museum south of Provo, a remnant of WPA activities during the Great Depression.

Both the domestic and the church architecture of the Mormons are largely derivative—adaptations of styles popular in the greater United States. There is a growing emphasis in church or “meetinghouse” architecture upon the plain and practical over the decorative. The meetinghouses demonstrate the social nature of Mormon life: in addition to a chapel for worship they always include a gymnasium with a stage for both theater and sports, numerous classrooms, a room for women’s activities, a fully equipped kitchen, a library, a Scout room, and a chapel for small children. Mormons have a strong tradition of landscape architecture and give considerable attention to beautifying church and public buildings with shrubs, lawns, and trees. The relative scarcity of timber in Utah and the early teaching of Joseph Smith favoring stone or brick over frame construction have led to the widespread use of brick for houses. In the twentieth century Chicago and California have been the main sources of innovation in Utah’s domestic architecture.

Temples are special structures reserved to the faithful for the most sacred rituals, and as such are very different in character from the spare functionalism of the meetinghouses. Mormon architects have used contemporary architectural styles in the temples, but their desire to make a significant statement in a stone structure of considerable size often gives the temples a distinctive, exotic character. Most temples in recent use have been lavishly decorated with murals, carved woods, and ornate and costly furniture and appointments, although those designed in the 1960s and 1970s show traces of the utilitarianism that characterizes Mormon meetinghouses.

Mormon writers, like Mormon painters, have worked within a fairly narrow range of acceptable forms. There are a number of excellent and powerful Mormon hymns. Periodical literature was produced in quantity at every Mormon stopping place from Missouri to Utah, and even in remote Utah towns manuscript newspapers were laboriously transcribed and circulated among the townspeople. The most important publications include the *Evening and Morning Star* (Independence, Missouri, 1832–33; Kirtland, Ohio, 1833–34), the *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo, Illinois, 1839–46), the *Millennial Star* (Liverpool, England, 1840–1970), the *Frontier Guardian* (Kanesville, Iowa, 1849–52), the *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, f. 1850), the *Woman’s Exponent* (Salt Lake City, 1872–1914), and the *Improvement Era* (Salt Lake City, 1897–1970). At least fourteen newspapers and as many magazines have been printed by church members as organs of the church since 1832. Most served primarily to communicate events

of interest to other Mormons, church doctrine and policy, and didactic stories and messages. The first journal addressing itself to Mormon scholars was *Brigham Young University Studies* (f. 1959); in 1966 *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* was founded in the face of strong disapproval by many in the church hierarchy. *Dialogue* was followed by the *Journal of Mormon History* (f. 1974), *Exponent II* (f. 1974), and *Sunstone* (f. 1975), the latter two serving especially Mormon women and college students. None of the scholarly journals is an official organ of the church; in fact all but *Brigham Young University Studies* and the *Journal of Mormon History* are printed by small groups without official sponsoring organizations. Creative writing became a Mormon literary endeavor relatively late, perhaps partly because the early church disapproved of novels. Vardis Fisher (1895–1968) is the most powerful novelist to write from a Mormon background. Many of his works, beginning with *Toilers of the Hills* (1929), are set in the Mormon West, and some, such as *Children of God* (1939), deal directly with the Mormon experience. Other novelists of Latter-day Saint background who have used Mormon themes are Samuel W. Taylor (1907–97), Virginia Sorensen (1912–91), Maurine Whipple (1904–92), and Levi S. Peterson (b. 1933). Non-Mormons Dale L. Morgan and Wallace Stegner have also contributed significantly to the literature of Mormonism.

There is a strong tradition of folk expression in Mormon literature. Personal journals and life histories abound, many of them eloquent and compelling. Stories of persecution, migration, and deeds of the pioneers are told and retold in a form which has become almost a Mormon litany. Stories of miraculous healings, visions, and visitations—and especially of such experiences on missions—are recited often. Most of these, like the writing of hymns and the periodical literature, serve to reinforce commitment and belief among the faithful; indeed a whole genre of such stories has developed, called by church members “faith-promoting experiences.” There is also a notable collection of humorous stories and songs, some containing elements of self-ridicule, but these are not as pervasive in the folk repertoire as the more serious themes.

What Mormons may lack in creative writing they make up in technological innovations. It is paradoxical that a group that historically has been hostile to the outside world and its influences has always embraced technology fully. The arid Utah climate forced Mormons into pioneering the use of irrigated agriculture as the base of a region-wide economy. Speculators in other arid western areas pointed to Mormon accomplishments in the 1880s and 1890s as models of what could be accomplished through irrigation. The many streams flowing west from the Wasatch Mountains did not require costly large-scale dams and canals, however, and Mormon achievement rested more with evol-

ing institutions for the control and apportionment of water than with developing the technology of surveying, designing, and constructing dams and irrigation works.

In other enterprises, however, the Mormons assiduously borrowed technologies already developed by others. In the mid-1850s, long before the sugar beet industry was established in America, church leaders purchased machinery for a sugar factory in France, had it shipped across the Atlantic and up the Missouri, then had it hauled by wagon across Nebraska and Wyoming to Utah in an unsuccessful effort to develop a native sugar industry. Similarly Mormons attempted without success to establish an iron industry in southern Utah in the 1850s. A successful paper plant was set up in 1851 and small textile mills were established in many Utah towns; some mills operated into the twentieth century. The state was among the first to extend electrical service to rural areas. The church uses the latest computer systems in handling population, mission, and financial data. Numerous church visitors' centers feature electronic displays as teaching and proselytizing devices. Perhaps most remarkably, parts of sacred temple rituals are now generally presented on film to participants.

Economic Institutions

Although the Mormon church invests successfully in the markets that sustain the American economy and there is much rhetoric about devotion to free enterprise, economic institutions functioning within the church are still strongly flavored by communal laws contained in Joseph Smith's revelations. The prophet's Law of Consecration and Stewardship stressed self-sufficiency, simplicity in living, and consumption according to need but preserved some elements of individualism—particularly the vision of entrepreneurial activity as an engine of economic progress and the marketplace as chief allocutor of goods and services. It also placed capital investment in the hands of church leaders and gave special attention to an internal system of poor relief.

Under Smith's plan, a new male communicant entering the system would agree to the "consecration" of all his possessions to the church and receive in return, as a lifetime lease contingent upon faithfulness, a "stewardship" consisting of materials and property needed to pursue a chosen trade and to domicile a family. The member was to use individual initiative to improve his stewardship during the ensuing year and report his progress to the bishop at the end of each year. During this "stewardship interview," any surplus above the "wants, needs, and circumstances" of the family was to be defined and given voluntarily to a general fund for relief for the poor, for general church expenses,

and for providing stewardships to new members and those coming of age. The system was practiced in Missouri in 1831–33, but failed. It was replaced in the 1840s by the “lesser law” of tithing, until, as church leaders explained, the Saints could demonstrate their worthiness to live the higher law.

Though organized under Consecration and Stewardship for only brief periods, the church has consistently taken an interest in and considerable responsibility for the temporal as well as the spiritual aspects of the lives of Mormons. Brigham Young assumed much of the burden of directing the development of Utah’s economy during his lifetime. Between 1848 and 1852 the church minted gold coins and issued its own currency. Under Young’s guidance the church established a large public works program to alleviate unemployment, especially for converts newly arrived in Utah who had not yet found permanent situations. It was under church call that strenuous efforts were made to develop industries in Utah in the 1850s.

Nor were the teachings of Joseph Smith forgotten in the rush to develop the newly settled land. Encouraged by some church leaders, a movement to consecrate private possessions and property to the church began in the mid-1850s. Perhaps as many as half the family heads executed deeds assigning their possessions to the church, although the church never actually took possession of the consecrated property. The cooperative movement of the late 1860s established cooperative retail stores in most Mormon towns and cooperative manufacturing establishments in many localities. Some of the retail stores lasted into the 1930s, and Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institution (f. 1869), or ZCMI, long since shorn of its cooperative aims, is one of Utah’s major department stores.

Some church leaders saw the cooperative movement as a preliminary step toward full practice of Joseph Smith’s communalism. A more dramatic move in that direction took place in 1874, when the aging Brigham Young attempted to place the whole economy under the United Order of Enoch, his own version of Smith’s system. In that year the economic resources of over two hundred Mormon towns were organized into some form of the United Order. The aims were to combine capital, promote regional and local self-sufficiency, divide labor, equalize consumption, and generally to “unite the temporal and spiritual interests of the Saints.” Although most United Orders failed almost immediately, efforts to make the system viable continued until the mid-1880s, when they were abandoned by a new church leadership less committed to communalism and under strong pressure from the U.S. government to abandon distinctive Mormon economic and social practices. Mormons have remained strongly impressed with the notion, instilled by a cen-

tury of preaching and exhortation, that they are under obligation to prepare for a time when they might be asked to live the United Order again.

The Welfare Program, a church-sponsored cooperative undertaking, shares many aspects with the United Order. The Welfare Program was organized in 1936 as a response to the Great Depression and continues to expand. Under the plan diocesan organizations called “stakes” purchase and maintain cooperative manufacturing or farming ventures that produce essential household commodities. These products are shipped to regional or central warehouses, where they are available for bishops to draw upon for the poor within their jurisdictions. Most labor on welfare projects is voluntary, supplied through local church congregations. Welfare commodities are also drawn upon to provide relief to victims of disasters such as floods, earthquakes, or war.

Another Mormon economic practice is the contribution by church members of an amount equivalent to or greater than the cost of two meals missed in a spiritual fast on the first Sunday of each month. These “fast offerings” are used to care for the local poor. Any excess is forwarded to church headquarters to help maintain an elaborate system of social and economic welfare services. In addition, for many years all Mormons have been advised to develop a personal or family program of food storage sufficient to sustain themselves for a full year if necessary. Church leaders claim that a major purpose of these various programs, including tithing, is to teach church members sufficient selflessness to be able to live under Consecration and Stewardship at some future time.

Ethnic Consciousness and Religious Organization

A related set of doctrines has strongly influenced the development of a Mormon ethnic consciousness. Mormons have believed since the 1830s that Christ will soon return to the earth to initiate a millennial reign. Therefore, the “restoration” of the true church and authority, lost from the earth through apostasy, was accomplished expressly for the purpose of preparing a covenanted people to administer world government under Christ. The Saints were selected from the nations so that they might be trained in moral precepts and necessary administrative skills. Missionary work has always been the primary vehicle of this selection process. In the nineteenth century the missionaries taught that the faithful should physically remove themselves from worldly influences and gather to Zion, where, concentrated in one geographical area, they could be instructed and reinforce one another in preparing to live the Law of Consecration and Stewardship and other celestial laws. Rapid growth of

church membership outside Utah in the twentieth century has made physical gathering of this sort impractical, but the church still fosters a number of teachings and practices which tend to separate faithful Mormons from non-Mormons, wherever they reside.

The religious hierarchy extends into every Mormon household, even those not involved in church activity. The primary unit of church organization is the “ward,” or local congregation of three hundred to six hundred members. A bishop oversees each ward and counsels his congregation in both religious and secular affairs. He is assisted by the Women’s Relief Society, first organized by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, and by the men and boys as members of the various priesthood quorums—high priests, seventies, and elders in the higher, or Melchizedek, priesthood and priests, teachers, and deacons in the lower, or Aaronic, priesthood. Boys enter the hierarchy at the age of twelve as deacons. Each rank has specific responsibilities; most assist in “home teaching”—making visits in pairs at least once a month to an assigned four or five families and reporting back to the bishop. Thus the ward, whether rural or urban, is like a village, with geographic boundaries (not commitment to church activity) defining membership and with considerable mutual solicitude.

Church organization ascends to the “stake” (several wards), presided over by a stake president, his two counselors, and a high council composed of twelve high priests. The next level is the region, a jurisdiction created in response to rapid church growth; it is presided over by a regional representative of the Twelve Apostles. Above the region is the churchwide level.

Those who hold high positions on a churchwide level are referred to as “general authorities.” They are for faithful Mormons quite literally “general” authorities, exercising worldwide authority in ecclesiastical affairs and commanding respect and obedience when they offer advice on religious and secular matters. They include the Presiding Bishop of the church, the First Quorum of the Seventy, the Patriarch of the Church, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the three-member First Presidency. The principal figure in the First Presidency is the prophet or president of the church, regarded as the mouthpiece of God upon the earth.

The church organization offers responsibility and authority at some level to all members willing to accept positions. All men hold offices in the lay priesthood, and all members are subject to “calls” for staffing a wide variety of religious, cultural, social, welfare, and recreational activities for both sexes and all age groups. Demonstration of faithfulness by living according to church teachings is officially required for calls to church positions; in practice, however, different positions require different levels of faithfulness, so that almost

anyone willing to accept a position is likely to be offered one. Thus members are involved in the organization through assuming responsibility for communicating general policies and teachings to others within their calling, and their involvement generates a high degree of loyalty to the broader system. It is difficult to obtain estimates on the number of "inactive" or nonengaged members—sometimes referred to as "Jack Mormons"—they probably range between 25 and 35 percent of the total church membership. Anyone baptized in the church is retained in the membership files wherever he or she goes and regardless of participation. The membership record is discontinued only upon formal request.

Education

Mormons see piety and priesthood as the main qualifications for leadership and the right to make pronouncements on doctrinal matters. There has never been a systematic rationalization of Mormon doctrines or canon of essential beliefs beyond a brief general statement by Joseph Smith in 1842. Communicants are expected to believe in Jesus Christ's redeeming mission and to accept the roles of Joseph Smith and his successors as present-day spokesmen for God. Scriptures, including the Book of Mormon and the compilation of Smith's revelations called the Doctrine and Covenants, are interpreted freely and variously by church members. This amorphous lay theology has reinforced a widespread disregard for some forms of higher education among the Mormons. Yet, paradoxically, education in general is highly prized, and a favorite maxim from the Doctrine and Covenants, "the Glory of God is intelligence," is often used to support the contention that intellectual endeavor is divinely sanctioned. Utah has an excellent public school system; public school expenditures total more than 11 percent of the personal incomes of Utah citizens, a proportion exceeded by only two other states. In addition, the proportion of college-age youth attending college is among the highest in the nation. The church subsidizes Brigham Young University, Ricks College, and other church schools. Most college-trained Mormons tend to be involved in public education and in practical trades or professions, such as business, law, or medicine, or in applied science; general church leaders and members alike regard intellectual curiosity with suspicion unless it is directed toward a practical end or clearly infused with a religious and moral perspective.

In pioneer Utah, schooling was the responsibility of the local wards, and the meetinghouse often served as both school and church. Mormons did not support public schools because they believed that moral and religious instruction

was an integral part of a child's education and that federal influence would prevent such instruction from being part of a public school curriculum. Because of the lack of public schools, non-Mormons in Utah established private denominational schools; these were so superior to the Mormon schools that many Saints enrolled their children in them. Church officials then reversed their policy and pushed for improved free grammar schools, which the Saints could control through their numerical majority. The teaching of moral values in high school remained a concern of the church leaders, however, and in the 1870s a number of church-maintained "academies" were established in heavily Mormon localities. They proved costly and redundant, and in the 1920s were given up in favor of a program that provided religious instruction at the seminary (high school) and institute (college) levels in buildings erected and maintained by the church close to public schools. If local laws do not permit Mormon youth to attend seminary classes during the school day, the program is adapted to provide religious instruction in the early morning and late afternoon.

Mormon involvement in higher education began in Nauvoo, where a university was founded and a few classes taught in the 1840s. The University of Deseret (now the University of Utah) was founded by the Mormons in 1850 but has since become a tax-supported state institution. Brigham Young University was established as a secondary school in 1875 and has grown into a major university with a student body of more than twenty-five thousand; it is wholly owned and operated by the Mormon church.

Politics

In politics as in education the Mormons have had difficulty defining appropriate boundaries between religious and secular affairs. Much of the trouble encountered by the early church in Missouri and Illinois was political and arose in part from the Mormons' tendency to vote as a block and when possible to elect church leaders to government positions. The Council of Fifty, organized in Nauvoo as an instrument of secular government under church control, retained influence throughout the nineteenth century.

When the federal government imposed territorial status upon Utah, it set off a half-century of conflict between the Saints and federal authorities. Mormons felt that the Washington appointees did not represent local interests. Moreover, some federal officials were openly anti-Mormon; they cast aspersions on the morals of Mormons and vowed to diminish church influence in the territory. After some officials complained that the Mormons were ungovernable and disloyal, President James Buchanan in 1857 appointed a non-

Mormon governor and sent a 2,500-man military force to install him. The Mormons, who had received little communication regarding the purpose of the expedition, chose to see it as an invading force and conducted guerrilla warfare against the troops, who camped on the plains of Wyoming during the winter of 1857–58. Eventually a compromise permitted the army to establish a post in a sparsely settled area forty-five miles southwest of Salt Lake City. Before the army was allowed to march through the city to its new quarters the Mormons evacuated the area, filled homes and orchards with straw, and appointed men to stand by ready to set fire to the settlement should the army commence any hostile actions. This army was recalled at the outbreak of the Civil War. In October 1862 uncertainty as to Mormon loyalty to the Union led to the establishment of Fort Douglas on the outskirts of Salt Lake City. The commander, Colonel Patrick E. Connor, encouraged publication of a virulently anti-Mormon newspaper, the *Union Vedette*, and attempted to dilute Mormon influence in the territory by fostering gold and silver mining.

Federal officials denounced the entire social system of the Mormons, including their communal activities, their hierarchical church government, and the remarkable loyalty of the general membership to church leaders. Outsiders saw the Mormons as the antithesis in almost every respect of what patriotic Americans should be and viewed the Mormon system as more akin to oriental despotism than to American democracy. This exotic image was enhanced by Mormon polygamy, practiced secretly since the 1840s and openly after 1852. Congress passed a series of antipolygamy laws between 1862 and 1887, when the Edmunds-Tucker Act provided instruments for destroying the economic and political power of the Mormon church. This act disincorporated the church and declared all church-owned property in excess of \$50,000 escheat to the federal government. It dissolved the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company in an effort to cut off the flow of Mormon converts from Europe. It undermined Mormon political strength by denying citizens of Utah the right to vote, serve on a jury, or hold public office until they had signed an oath pledging support of and obedience to all antipolygamy laws. The act further reduced Mormon political power by denying the franchise to women, who had been given the right to vote by the territorial legislature in 1870.

Initially the church avoided the full impact of the financial provisions of the Edmunds-Tucker Act by entrusting church property to individuals or associations. However, church leaders wished to challenge the law before the Supreme Court as quickly as possible; to avoid delays in lower courts they agreed to turn over to the federal receiver \$800,000 in real and personal property in exchange for a promise that no more claims would be pressed against church property.

Properties in downtown Salt Lake City, including even the temple block, were rented by the church from the receiver until the matter was resolved.

In the meantime church leaders, forced underground to avoid prosecution, submitted to Congress a request for statehood and prepared a constitution that outlawed polygamy and required separation of church and state. Their petition was denied in committee. Hopes for redress were dashed in May 1890 when the Supreme Court sustained the Edmunds-Tucker Act. Finally, in August 1890, the church president, Wilford Woodruff, announced the "Manifesto," which recommended that Mormons no longer contract marriages contrary to federal law. After a period of adjustment the Mormons entirely abandoned polygamy. It is presently practiced only by members of what Mormons call "fundamentalist" groups, who are excommunicated by the main church when such practices are discovered.

Elections in Utah during the pioneer period featured a one-party slate with church leaders filling civil positions often analogous to their church positions. A growing non-Mormon, or Gentile, population united in the 1870s with a dissident Mormon faction to form the Liberal party, which was countered by the pro-Mormon People's party. In national politics the Mormons, sensitive to states' rights issues, tended to vote Democratic. So one-sided were politics in Utah that a federal commission appointed in 1882 to administer territorial elections demanded a viable two-party system as a condition of statehood; in order to achieve the recommended political balance Mormon leaders encouraged some of their followers to become Republicans. Statehood was granted in January 1896, forty-six years after Brigham Young began his efforts toward that end. In the process Utah had undergone a "reconstruction" not unlike that experienced in the South after the Civil War.

Up to the end of World War II Utah residents did not consistently support any one political faction. Since that time some church leaders have outspokenly favored conservative positions on key issues, reflecting a long-standing bias against federal interference in local affairs and a protracted response to charges of un-Americanism in the late nineteenth century. Despite this, however, voting has for the most part followed national trends, although voting on local issues is usually conservative.

Social Structure

A conception of themselves as a "covenant people" has been reinforced by other doctrines that encourage Mormons to make the primary division in their social world between Mormon and Gentile. Mormon children grow up with

a conflict between their identity as Mormons and their national identity similar to the conflict experienced by youth in ethnic minorities throughout the world. Even converts who have not been in Utah are commonly ostracized by former associates, which encourages them to develop new ties almost exclusively within the church.

The most important social stratification within Mormonism is by church office. But despite much nepotism at the higher levels, particularly in the past, the system as a whole is strongly egalitarian in character. Callings to church office are tendered on the basis of piety and diligence in church service rather than wealth or occupational status, and there is considerable rotation in all offices but those of general authorities. General church, stake, and ward offices nonetheless carry overtones connoting status within the community.

Since the mid-nineteenth century the ward has been the fundamental social group for both urban and rural Mormons, and understanding its structure and function is necessary to an understanding of Mormon society. The ward defines the neighborhood in cities and the town in rural areas. Moreover, these ward "villages," whether in downtown Salt Lake City, suburban Dallas, or Berlin's Dahlem, are very similar. Church classes throughout the world study the same material on roughly the same schedule; the same attitudes toward the general church leadership prevail everywhere; distinctive use of particular words or phrases, or the equivalency in translation, is evident; meetinghouses even have the same architecture. Although many find the uniformity stifling, newcomers to a ward usually experience an immediate sense of community approaching kinship (Mormons refer to one another as "brother" and "sister"), which has distinct social and organizational advantages. Mormons feel themselves a part of an extensive family that transcends geographic and social boundaries; they are clannish and inward looking, acutely attuned to important happenings within their world, and not greatly interested in external affairs. Active Mormons have little social contact outside the ward in which they reside and even less outside the stake of which their ward is part.

Family and Kinship

Joseph Smith's First Vision was in part a result of anxiety over division within his own family on matters of religion. Since his time Mormonism has been preoccupied with family structure and family relationships. "Sealing," or eternal marriage, initiated by Smith in Nauvoo, clearly has the function of promising to secure family unity beyond life on earth. In Mormon temple marriages partners are pronounced husband and wife for all eternity rather than for just

their mortal lives, with the promise that worthy parents and children will associate as a family in the hereafter. Similarly, a sealing ceremony is performed in temples for deceased families, with descendants or other Latter-day Saints assuming the names of the deceased and acting as proxies for them during the ceremony. Mormons believe that once the earthly ordinances are performed for the deceased in the temple, the dead, now residing in a spirit world where individuals still exercise free will, can decide whether or not to accept the sealings, baptisms, and other temple work performed in their interest by living persons. Such ceremonies provide the rationale for massive genealogical programs that make it a religious obligation for church members to reconstruct family history at least four generations back and further if records permit.

Implicit in the doctrine of eternal marriage is plural marriage, for several wives sealed to a man serially in this life would all be with him in the afterlife. Plural marriage was practiced secretly by Joseph Smith and a few close associates in Nauvoo. Until 1852, when the Saints were safe in Utah, church leaders issued carefully phrased denials to charges that polygamous marriages were taking place; in reality, however, polygamy was common from the early 1840s until 1890.

Although studies of Mormon polygamy have generally been based on samples overrepresenting elites, some reasonably reliable facts have emerged. Most studies indicate that 8 to 12 percent of married men had more than one wife. In one southern Utah town, however, 24 percent of the inhabitants were members of polygamous households, a figure which perhaps is more significant in understanding the importance of polygamy in the society. Census schedules for other areas suggest that this figure is not unusual. Samples of lists of polygamous families show that about 70 percent of the men had two wives, 21 percent had three, and 9 percent had four or more.

Apparently polygamy was never sufficiently widespread among the Mormons to prevent single young men from finding wives; studies indicate that there was always a reserve of unmarried persons of both sexes at all age levels. The sociologists James L. Smith and Phillip R. Kunz have concluded that because a significant number of the wives entering polygamous marriages were older than wives entering monogamous ones, they were women who had "survived" the monogamous marriage market. It is apparently not true that each polygamous union doomed some men to unwilling bachelorhood. The common practice of taking widows and spinsters into polygamous families indicates that polygamy had the effect of diminishing the importance of romantic love as a consideration in family formation. It also reduced the possibility that some women might remain involuntarily outside a family group, an im-

portant consideration, given the great stress church leaders placed on the family as the fundamental unit of an ordered society.

Polygamy was of far greater importance in shaping non-Mormon attitudes toward Mormons than the numbers involved suggest. Non-Mormon political leaders and churchmen, opposed to the Mormon system generally, were shocked by polygamy and saw it as an issue that could be used to bring about anti-Mormon feeling throughout America and destroy the movement. Thus strong attacks were launched against Mormon polygamy, especially in the 1880s. Instead of eliminating the division between the Mormon and non-Mormon worlds, these attacks increased it by causing all Mormons, polygamous or not, to unite in defense of their system.

Another aspect of Mormon preoccupation with the family is the law of adoption, begun under Joseph Smith and practiced until the 1890s. Church members without Mormon parents were "adopted" into the families of church leaders in a transaction that entailed both filial and paternal obligations and often formed the basis of lifelong associations. Modern vestiges of these concerns are evident in the prevalence of family organizations and reunions among Mormons, activities strongly urged by high church leaders. Mormons are aware of and often identify others by the family or clan to which they belong.

Church authorities have issued solemn declarations on the importance of family and spent vast sums on media spots and programs to promote the teaching that stable family relationships are fundamental to a healthy society. Pornography, sexual permissiveness, gay liberation, liberal divorce laws, abortion, and women's liberation are opposed by Mormon leaders as threats to family stability. They also oppose birth control, but rather than preach against it they have consistently taught that children are a blessing and that parenthood is an essential lesson in Christian giving. Indeed, Mormons believe that the highest celestial blessings cannot be obtained outside the marriage union. In consequence, Mormon fertility remained over twice as high as American norms in the mid-1970s. In 1976 the Mormon birthrate was 29.8 per thousand, and the national average was 14.7.

The emphasis on family and family values has helped shape the response of many Mormons to the women's liberation movement, particularly the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The Latter-day Saint church has always been strongly patriarchal in its organizational structure and has emphasized the importance of women's roles as homemakers. All worthy men are ordained to the priesthood, but not women. Leadership in all church organizations except those that exclusively serve women, small children, and teenage girls is reserved to men. Surprisingly, given this fundamental aspect of church gov-

ernment, nineteenth-century Mormon women were encouraged to enter professions and take responsibilities outside the home. Apparently the pressing need for workers in a developing economy momentarily overcame the fundamental belief that women should be primarily guardians of home and family. Prominent Mormon women of the nineteenth century, such as Brigham Young's daughter Susa Young Gates (1856–1933) and Emmeline B. Wells (1828–1921), were active in the suffrage movement and were well acquainted with its national leadership. Utah women, who received the vote in 1870, were among the first in the nation to be given full suffrage. Twentieth-century church leaders, however, observing changes in societal values that they believe to be destructive to the family, have increasingly advised women to make nurturing children and building a family their first responsibilities in life. The leaders have seen the women's liberation movement generally and the ERA particularly as causes that divert women from their primary role. The position of the church undoubtedly influenced Utah's negative response to the ERA.

Intergroup Relations

Mormon-Gentile conflict remains a muted but real aspect of life in heavily Mormon areas, where the social world is clearly divided into Mormon and Gentile realms that have little interaction or common understanding. The tendency to regard all non-Mormons as Gentiles has diminished Mormon awareness of other ethnic groups; sizable Greek and Italian communities exist in Utah with little evidence of ethnic tension beyond that common in Mormon relations with all Gentile groups.

Blacks and American Indians, however, are exceptions. Until 1978 Mormons denied blacks ordination to the lay priesthood and access to temple rituals, both of which were open to males of all other races. There was no clear doctrinal rationale for this exclusion, which was applied only to Africans; ironically, it apparently arose as a reaction to criticism of Mormon opposition to slavery in the 1830s.

Occasional comments by past church leaders indicated that future revelations might change the practice, a promise fulfilled in June 1978, when church president Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) announced a revelation extending the right of ordination to all worthy male members of the church. The membership responded warmly, and no significant dissent has been evident. The small number of blacks in Utah minimizes overt expression of racial tension, and it is therefore difficult to assess its effect on race relations in heavily Mormon areas. Blacks in such localities claim that exclusion was not the only expression of

racial prejudice, but one sociological study has indicated that Mormons are no different in their racial attitudes from non-Mormons in the West.

Mormon doctrine teaches that American Indians are remnants of a Book of Mormon people—the Lamanites—a race descended from a migrant band of ancient Israelites with a tarnished past but great promise and a specific mission in the Mormon millennial scheme. The first major missionary effort of Mormons, in 1830, was directed toward American Indians. Strenuous efforts to “redeem” the Lamanites have continued since that time.

Indian skirmishes took place in the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, but Brigham Young’s overriding policy was to avoid conflict and fraternize as much as possible in order to “civilize” the Indians and help them adjust to modern white society. Early Mormon settlements in areas frequented by Indians commonly set aside “Indian farms” or plots of land for their use. In the nineteenth century numerous efforts under church auspices to establish farms, reservations, and settled communities for local tribes were made independently of federal Indian policies. Such efforts often soured relations between Mormons and federal Indian agents but led generally to good relations between Mormons and Indians, many of whom submitted to Mormon baptism and differentiated between Mormons and other whites. Mormons teach that Polynesians are likewise descendants of Book of Mormon peoples, and missionary efforts have been remarkably successful among the Maori of New Zealand and in Tonga, Samoa, Tahiti, and Hawaii. Church records indicate that in 1970 over 15 percent of all Tongans, 14 percent of all Samoans, and nearly 5 percent of all French Polynesians were Mormons. During the 1960s and 1970s members of these groups immigrated to Salt Lake City and other Mormon areas in substantial numbers.

The Mormon Indian placement program of the twentieth century is clearly an extension of nineteenth-century efforts to change the lifestyle of the Indians and help them adapt to modern society. Under this program Indian children whose parents so decide were taken for the school year into Mormon homes, often far from the parental home, treated as family members, and sent to local public schools. Difficulties of adjustment and fear that children will be alienated from their native culture persisted. The program was modified in an attempt to meet these problems and eventually abandoned. Brigham Young University has a remarkably successful record of keeping the dropout rate for first-year Indian college students far below that of other universities with sizable Indian minorities. Mormon-Indian relations have historically been fair to excellent in contrast to the hostile relations prevailing in neighboring western states.

Group Maintenance

Several circumstances have served to erect and maintain social boundaries between Mormons and others. Partly by design, Mormons were physically isolated from Gentiles from the earliest periods of Mormon history; where possible, the Saints lived together in separate communities. Their early difficulties resulted in part from insufficient isolation, and the choice of the Great Basin as a new settling place in 1847 was deliberate: even the waters there did not mingle with those of the outside. For a quarter-century Mormons were free to work out their own particular lifestyle. Even after 1869, when the Transcontinental Railroad began to bring Gentiles to Utah, the newcomers stayed for the most part in the cities or in separate mining camps. Thus the isolation continued well into the twentieth century.

Social isolation has reinforced the physical isolation of Mormons. The persecutions created an initial wall of hostility and distrust; a generation later, plural marriage became an equally divisive issue that taught Mormons to regard outsiders as enemies. The desire for isolation led to Brigham Young's call in 1854 for creation of the Deseret alphabet, a phonetic system based on Pitman shorthand. Schoolbooks, newspapers, official church documents and papers, and parts of the Book of Mormon were printed in this alphabet between 1854 and 1867. One of Young's wives, Eliza R. Snow (1804–87), designed and attempted to introduce distinctive styles of dress in order to free Mormon women from outside fashion trends. Neither the new alphabet nor new dress styles were widely adopted or of lasting effect.

After abandoning or modifying plural marriage, communal life, and other distinctive aspects of the group character, church leaders began to place greater stress on the Word of Wisdom—the Mormon health law proscribing alcohol, tea, coffee, and tobacco. The Word of Wisdom was revealed by Joseph Smith in 1831 but was not rigidly observed until the 1920s. Now that strict adherence is required as a condition for entrance into the temple, the Word of Wisdom makes Mormons uncomfortable at cocktail parties, coffee breaks, and other such gatherings which serve the rest of American society as important occasions for social interaction. The Word of Wisdom is in some measure to twentieth-century Mormons what polygamy was to those of the nineteenth century—a mark of peculiarity setting them apart from much of the rest of American society.

In addition Mormon youth, especially young men, are taught from childhood to prepare to fulfill a two-year mission that totally removes them from normal young adult society; they spend this time teaching and defending

Mormonism, clearly an effective way of building a life-long loyalty and commitment. There is also strong pressure to marry in Mormon temples. Because only faithful Mormons can enter the temples by obtaining a certificate of worthiness from their bishop and stake president, the importance attached to temple marriage limits teenage dating and other contact with non-Mormons. Statistics for the United States are unavailable, but a study of Canadian Mormons reported that 80 percent of rural and 70 percent of urban youth marry other Mormons. Provision of a full range of church-sponsored social activities in each ward and the maintenance of church universities, seminaries, and institutes serve to decrease outside contact and to increase opportunities to marry within the group. In addition, ward activities permit the fully engaged Mormon little time for outside social engagements. Thus, devout Mormons have always kept considerable distance, both physically and socially, from non-Mormon society.

Accommodation and Ethnic Commitment

In the years since the bitter decades attending resolution of the polygamy issue, Mormon accommodation to greater American society has been more apparent than real. Traits remain that caused much criticism of Mormons in the nineteenth century: unreserved obedience to church authority, difficulty in making distinctions between secular and religious realms, commitment to cooperative and communal activities, and devotion to the church above all other loyalties. The remarkable success of present-day general church programs depends to a considerable degree upon precisely those traits that made the system so tenacious and successful in the past. Most such programs take place within a purely religious framework, but the welfare program extends into the economic sphere and provides a model for broader expansion into the secular realm should church leaders deem it necessary. Moreover, the voluntary responsiveness of Mormons to the calls and counsel of church leaders may be even more pronounced than it was in the nineteenth century and thus permits continued flexibility in the system. If the need arose, these avid proponents of capitalism and free enterprise might well lead their people into a communal life where rewards would be determined by need, and contribution by ability.

Mormon society during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century was relatively outward looking and open to external influence. Since the 1960s, this trend has been reversing and a more defensive attitude similar to that prevailing in the nineteenth century has developed, partly as a reaction to a perceived

disintegration of moral values in the greater society, particularly as they relate to sexual mores and family life. Perhaps more important, however, a people committed to unity and order as prime social virtues are reacting to what they see as an increasingly chaotic outside world. Over the next few decades, the Mormons, despite an aggressive missionary program and commitment to build a worldwide church, may move toward making even sharper the boundaries dividing their world from that of the Gentiles.

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