



MONASH University

Trans-Atlantic Mormon Missionary Techniques: 1830 - 1869

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Abstract

This thesis takes a transatlantic frame in order to investigate the development of early Mormon missionary techniques in Britain and America from 1830-1869. Moving beyond official sources, it integrates diaries and journals from converts and missionaries with the intention of building a bottom up understanding of early missionary work as it was actually practiced in the field. Divided into three chapters, this thesis begins by focusing on American Mormon missionary techniques, before moving on to an analysis of how and why techniques changed in Britain. The final chapter is dedicated to Mormon retention work carried out across both America and Britain, since the author argues that retaining converts is central to any missionary work, even if it does not always get the same attention from historians as proselytising does.

Key findings include the identification of multiple techniques that have been previously neglected or unrecognised. In particular, this thesis identifies the widespread use of faith healing as a missionary technique, even though its use as a proselytising tool was banned by Church authorities. It also argues that discipline, and excommunication in particular, was an essential retention practice that effectively stopped the spread of disillusionment in the Church. In comparing both the British and American mission, this thesis concludes that the British mission dropped the circuit riding style essential to the American mission, in favour of a more meticulously organised system. It also argues that other early Mormon missions followed the British model over the American one.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Trans-Atlantic Mormon Missionary Techniques

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Introduction

Early nineteenth-century America saw the establishment of many churches with new practices and beliefs. However, most thought that Joseph Smith's 'Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints', more commonly known as Mormons, was an unacceptable innovation, even during this time of radical experimentation.¹ Scholars have struggled to explain why the strange and heavily persecuted Church continued to expand across continents and grow in membership. This thesis represents one explanation by investigating Mormon missionary techniques in a transatlantic frame. Moving beyond American sources as well as official policy, it integrates diaries and journals from converts and missionaries from both the American and British missions. In so doing, this thesis complicates common explanations of Mormonism's foundation and growth, which usually emphasise the unique conditions of the American religious market.

When Joseph Smith founded the six member Church of Latter Day Saints in 1830, North America had already been in the throes of a decades long religious revival commonly referred to as 'The Second Great Awakening'.² This era saw new churches founded, while the membership of historically smaller denominations grew to rival larger sects. The Methodist

1 Due to the foundational text being named 'The Book of Mormon', members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints were often referred to as Mormons or Mormonites. Referring to 'Mormons' was often pejorative, and the present day Church insists on its proper name or the abbreviated LDS. 'Mormon' has still remained a common term for members. Since the formal title of the Church did change a few times during the foundational years of my study, and since 'Mormon' is a short, simple and commonly understood term, I will generally refer the members of the Church as Mormons, or occasionally, 'saints'. On the other hand, the term LDS will exclusively refer to the present day Church and its members.

2 The Church was originally founded with the short lived name, "Church of Christ". However, members were often called 'saints' or 'latter day saints'. See "Minutes of a Conference" *The Evening and Morning Star*, vol.2 no.20 1834; Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (Utah: Signature Books, 1994), 160.

church alone grew from fourteen thousand members in 1784 to over a million by 1844.³ Because so many of these revivalist churches desired unordained members to take on roles as lay preachers, these churches waged a fierce battle for membership. During this era, North America housed more preachers per capita than at any other time.⁴ Furthermore, religious life rapidly developed beyond church services. Americans were presented with a multitude of sermons, debates and lessons that took place in anywhere from public halls, private homes or at pop up camp meetings.

These ‘revivalist’ movements were characterised by their travelling lay preachers, claims to unimpeded encounters with God, excitement over an impending Golden Age, and an optimistic belief in universal salvation that opposed the idea that God ‘predestined’ some people to sin.⁵ Predestinationism often precluded missionary work, since working to save souls from a predetermined fate was a pointless, and even offensive, exercise. On the other hand, Second Great Awakening churches embraced missionary work. In rejecting Predestinationism, these churches affirmed the belief in free will and the possibility of individual salvation. By the time Mormonism was founded, these mission-orientated churches of the Second Great Awakening had already developed intricate missionary techniques of their own.

Primarily, revivalism was about garnering conversion through emotion: preachers encouraged a frenzied emotional overload encouraging audiences to feel God’s power through falling,

3 Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), 220

4 Ibid.,4

5 Peter W. Williams, “The Second Great Awakening”, *America's Religions*, 4th edition. First published 1990 (Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2015) 183-184; Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 220; Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America* (New York: Scribner, 1965), 172-3.

jerking, dancing, speaking in tongues, or a number of other spectacular expressions of the spirit.⁶ The Presbyterian minister Charles G. Finney's 1835 magnum opus 'Revival Lectures' is an excellent historical insight into revivalist techniques.⁷ It is functionally a handbook on how to organise and run prayer sessions, the benefits and limitations of revivalist methods, how churches should aid ministers, and the theological justifications for these techniques. The most intense of these experiences could not be found on the regular circuit. Instead, preachers organised 'camp meetings' where they could work on audiences for a number of days without worldly distractions.⁸ Finney even advocated for the 'anxious bench'; a special place reserved up front where the minister could focus on those on the brink of conversion. Even when there was no bench, ministers should single people out by walking amongst the crowd.⁹ These practices were conscious techniques, with Finney explaining that the aim of the isolated anxious bench was to placate converts' concerns that they were only converting out of group pressure.¹⁰ The overarching strategic thrust of all revivalism was to garner conversions quickly and en masse.¹¹

However, emotional zeal was not the only revivalist strategy. One of the defining beliefs behind the movement was that the Bible depicted a simple and intensely spiritual age that needed to be revived after an extended period of spiritual drought.¹² By extension, many

6 James D. Bratt "Religious Anti-Revivalism in Antebellum America" *Journal of the Early Republic*, 24, no. 1 (2004), 69-73.

7 Charles Grandison Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Company, 1835).

8 *Ibid.*, 118-120.

9 *Ibid.*, 118, 120-121.

10 *Ibid.*, 121.

11 Williams, *America's Religions*, 189.

12 Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 387.

churches adopted forms of primitivism, or the belief that one must mimic the early church as closely as possible.¹³ Furthermore, many major Second Great Awakening churches supported some kind of lay preaching, meaning preachers were not ordained. Methodists deployed ‘circuit riders’ who visited sparse communities on a set route (or circuit) and preached where they could in-between.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Baptists deployed grass-roots ‘farmer-preachers’ who preached to anyone they could gather around them.¹⁵ On a more practical level, missionary work was unshackled from the reliance on ordained clergy, leading to larger missionary forces. Finally, many Second Great Awakening churches adopted some system of public discipline. In general, these groups believed that a true Church should punish sin and cast out unrepentant sinners.¹⁶ This was partly motivated by a belief that publicly disciplining followers built legitimacy.

Many of these beliefs and techniques influenced Mormonism’s own foundation. Appealing to primitivist sensitivities, Joseph Smith formed the church after declaring himself a prophet, claiming that an angel helped him discover an ancient Golden Bible known as the Book of Mormon. This Bible depicted a multigenerational epic tale of a Jerusalem prophet who at the request of God, built an ark with his family and sailed to America. There they founded the pious Nephite kingdom from 600 BCE until their destruction by the Lamanites, the principal

13 C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of the Churches of Christ*, (Texas: Abilene Christian University Press, 1988).

14 Williams, *America's Religions*, 19; Wilford Goodliffe “American frontier religion: Mormons and their Dissenters 1830-1900” (PhD. diss., University of Idaho, 1976), 30.

15 Williams, *America's Religions*, 91.

16 Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South 1785-1900*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 13-14, 30.

ancestors of the Native Americans, in 385 CE.¹⁷ However, these foundational beliefs were not even the Church's most controversial. Mormons soon preached polygamous marriages as an ideal, and the ensuing backlash coupled with a church structure that demanded sizable portions of both the saints' time and money did little to attract converts.

Considering the contents of the Book of Mormon, one would think that the Church's appeal stemmed from Americanising the Bible for an American audience, yet the Church attracted converts across the globe. Smith sent missionaries to Britain in 1837 and to Tahiti in 1843. While the Tahitian mission was a small scale and largely unsuccessful endeavour, the British mission was so fertile that it began yielding more converts than even the United States.¹⁸ After Joseph Smith's brutal murder by a mob of anti-Mormons in 1844, Brigham Young took on the Church's presidency. As the former president of the British mission, Young eagerly sent missionaries even more broadly. Between 1849 and 1852, missions opened across Europe, as well as in Australia, Siam, India, Hawaii and Chile. Most of these missions were soon closed with minimal converts, though missionaries in Scandinavia found nearly as much success as the British mission. The appeal of the supposedly American Church clearly extended beyond American borders. By 1860, Mormonism had grown from a six-person church to an 80,000 person empire, over a quarter of whom were British born.¹⁹

17 Eldin Ricks, "The Small Plates of Nephi and the Words of Mormon," in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr., (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990), 209–19.

18 Phillip A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of their British Converts in the 19th Century* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), 20.

19 Tim B. Heaton, "Vital Statistics" in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, edited by Daniel H. Ludlow, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 1519.

The Church's strange history raises multiple questions that this thesis seeks to answer. There are questions regarding why converts were attracted to Mormonism in particular, and how missionaries convinced them to be baptised. How did missionaries convince people to join a persecuted Church that held beliefs that even converts themselves often found distasteful? If converts were unaware or underestimated these challenges, why did converts remain when they discovered or experienced them? Furthermore, how did the Church find so much success in Britain in particular, when the Church's origin and beliefs seem so geared towards an American audience? As a result, this thesis takes a transatlantic frame in order to investigate the first few decades of Mormon missionary techniques used to attract and retain converts. The study of transatlantic Mormon missionary techniques also has wider implications for nineteenth-century Christianity as a whole. Though transatlantic revivalism has seen some attention, the same cannot be said of anti-revivalist groups like the Mormons.

Historiography

Historians have adopted different approaches to explaining the origins and character of the Second Great Awakening. Winthrop S. Hudson called it a period of "pregnant possibility", while Nathan Hatch's landmark work, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, cites the widespread adoption of lay preaching as evidence that the era represented an outpouring of populist Christianity that cast off the traditional, authoritarian Churches of the old world.²⁰ Some historians have since challenged these depictions.²¹ Amanda Porterfield has presented a period motivated less by hopeful expressions of democratic freedom, and instead as a

²⁰ Hudson, *Religion in America*, 387; Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 3-5, 220.

²¹ Monica Najar, *Evangelizing the South: A Social History of Church and State in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8-9.

hierarchical and disciplinary response to partisan politics and sceptical interpretations of the Bible.²²

With the Mormon Church's foundation in 1830 dovetailing the end of the Second Great Awakening, scholars of both Mormonism specifically and nineteenth-century American Christianity more broadly have struggled to place the Church within the wider movement. Scholars writing about the Second Great Awakening usually herald Mormonism as the ultimate expression of radical Second Great Awakening experimentation. Hatch claims that the Book of Mormon's major theme is that of "profound protest" against the wealthy and learned, while historian Sydney Ahlstrom classified Mormonism as one of a handful of 'communitarian' Churches working to build utopian communities.²³ This is not without basis, since Mormonism clearly embraced many parts of revivalism, such as the rejection of Predestinationism and embrace primitivism, along with the adoption of some common Second Great Awakening preaching techniques.²⁴ In fact, Mormon historian Steven C. Harper went as far as to say that, "The Mormons sent out a more basic traveling ministry than the Methodists, became more Baptist than the Baptists, and claimed a more direct restoration of the 'ancient order' than the Disciples of Christ."²⁵

22 Amanda Porterfield, *Conceived in doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 2012), 1-11.

23 Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 116; Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 502.

24 Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 502; Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 113-121; Grant Underwood, "Millenarianism and the Early Mormon Mind" *Journal of Mormon History*, 9 (1982). – Underwood focuses on Mormonism's millenarianism and restorationism

25 Steven C. Harper, "Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace: Mormon Proselyting in the 1830s" *Journal of Mormon History*, 24, no. 2 (1998), 3.

But most scholars of Mormonism specifically have instead focused on the idea that the Church grew out a rejection of the Second Great Awakening, or “burned-over” districts. The term was first coined by revivalist thinker and anti-masonry activist Charles Finney, who literally wrote the handbook on revivalist techniques.²⁶ Working the same region of New York as Joseph Smith did, Finney claimed that efforts to get Americans into church had been so successful that there were no more unaffiliated Americans, (fuel), to burn (convert). The revivalist membership drives developed by Finney and his Second Great Awakening peers were defined by their emotionally charged nature. Whether it be in the pop up revival camps of the frontier, or intimate local meetings, preachers whipped up excitement and anxiousness for the impending rapture.²⁷ This excitement was so extreme that audiences fainted, yelled, spoke in tongues, fell into fits, and any number of other signs of the Holy Ghost’s presence.²⁸ It was hoped that peer pressure would sweep up the rest. In some instances, preachers reserved front row ‘anxious benches’ for those on the brink of conversion. Here, the preacher could personally ‘work on’ the subjects for hours.²⁹ The hysterically emotional thrust of these revivals was so extreme, that a present day witness might look upon these techniques as akin to ‘brain washing’.

Historians have adopted the burned-over metaphor to claim that the region was actually burned *out* by these techniques. They claim that Americans in the region where Mormonism was founded were fatigued and disillusioned by revivalism, and that in the wake of that

26 Charles G. Finney, *Revival Lectures*, (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1835).

27 Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 387; Hudson, *Religion in America*, 172-173.

28 Williams, *America’s Religions*, 187-188.

29 Ibid.

disillusionment were prone to the foundation of new churches like Joseph Smith's.³⁰ But it is difficult to tell if the burned-over district even existed, considering the circular arguments presented by scholars. The problem is that scholars such as Whitney Cross, Fawn Brodie, Sydney Ahlstrom and Peter Williams argue that the burned-over district gave rise to Mormonism, even though they point to Mormonism as the primary evidence for the existence of that district in the first place.³¹ Still, many historians believe that Mormonism is better defined as a rejection, rather than embodiment of the Second Great Awakening, whether or not there was a specific disillusioned district with definable borders.³² Marvin S. Hill argued, "These Mormons were casualties of the Protestant conversion process, of sectarianism, and especially of revivalism."³³ Hill further contrasted Mormon conversions as slow periods of reasoning, rather than the "immediate moment of frenzy" of revivalists.³⁴ Meanwhile, historian Jan Shipps argues that the sectarian competitiveness of revivalist Churches led to the growth of unaffiliated 'seekers' who developed an affinity for alternative, unorganised religious expression.³⁵ I would ultimately agree the Mormonism was anti-revivalist. However, since the Church also drew upon other aspects of Second Great Awakening practices so heavily, we cannot simply call Mormonism completely reactionary. Mormonism

30 Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual Origins of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York 1800-1850*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950); Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, first published 1945 (Great Britain: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963), 12-15.

31 Peter W. Williams, *America's Religions*, 188-189; Linda K. Pritchard illustrated this problem best in: "The Burned-over District Reconsidered: A Portent of Evolving Religious Pluralism in the United States" *Social Science History*, 8, no. 3 (1984), 243-265.

32 Marvin S. Hill "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District: Another View" *New York History*, 61, no. 4 (1980), 424, 426; Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of A New Religious Tradition*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 8-9

33 Hill "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District", 426.

34 *Ibid.*, 424.

35 Shipps, *Mormonism*, 8-9.

had a complex relationship with the Second Great Awakening, which is reflected in the complex origins of its techniques.

Though the Second Great Awakening seems distinctly American, it was part of a larger revivalist trend across much of the protestant world. In 1978, Richard Carwadine argued that American and British revivalist preachers were in close contact, with Charles Finney even carrying out mildly successful preaching tours across the Atlantic.³⁶ More recent nineteenth-century religious scholarship has increasingly broadened its geographical scope. David Bebbington demonstrated that revivalist movements often transcended geography. Instead, he argues that differences in revivalist practice were driven by denominational factors.³⁷ Annette G. Aubert illustrated the Germanic influences on American religion, while J. Landes's study of London Quakers proposed that both British and American Quakers were functionally one community.³⁸ But while Mormons have found a place in the centre of *American* religious historiography, international studies have neglected a Mormon dimension.³⁹ Carwadine mentions the Mormons in one aside, while Bebbington's 'Victorian Religious Revivals'

36 Richard Carwadine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790 – 1865*, (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1978).

37 David Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

38 J. Landes, *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World: The Creation of an Early Modern Community*, (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2015); Annette G. Aubert, *The German Roots of Nineteenth-Century American Theology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

39 Stephen J. Fleming, "Becoming the American Religion: The Place of Mormonism in the Development of American Religious Historiography", *Mormon Historical Studies*, 4, no. 1 (2003), 3-22.

ignored them entirely.⁴⁰ Though the British mission outstripped the Church's membership rates in America, Mormonism continues to be seen in primarily American terms.⁴¹

Meanwhile, studies of Mormonism's overseas missions are usually in isolation.⁴² Studies therefore tend to develop detailed analysis of Mormonism in a specific country, county or even city without exploring the relationship between missions. In his 1951 Ph.D. thesis on Mormon missionaries, the eminent historian George S. Ellsworth admitted that he only made reference to overseas missionary activity in so far as it impacted America.⁴³ Following suit, studies that draw upon multiple regions continue to do so only as an aside to their ultimate study of a single country or city.⁴⁴ As a result, even though there are compelling reasons to suggest that missions heavily influenced one another, Mormon scholarship has given little attention to the cross-pollination that occurred between missions. Considering that the British mission was opened by American Mormons and that the 'gathering' policy (which depicted Mormons as the scattered Israelites that needed to congregate to build up Zion) saw many

40 Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism*; Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals*.

41 Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); Williams, *America's Religions*, 236; David J. Whittaker "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" found in *The Blackwell companion to religion in America*, edited by Phillip Goff (Malden, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 508-526; J. Spencer Fluhman, *A Peculiar People: Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

42 Whittaker "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints", 518-519.

43 George S. Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830-1860." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1951, iv-v.

44 Johnnie Glad, *The Mission of Mormonism in Norway 1851-1920: A Study and Analysis of the Reception Process*, (Frankfurt: Peter Land, 2006); James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles*, (Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, 2009); Jan G. Harris, "Mormons in Victorians Manchester", *Brigham Young University Studies*, 17 (1987), 46-56; F. James Bingley, Jr "Becoming American: The Welsh Mormon Journey" (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 2010); Kim B. Östman "From Finland to Zion: Immigration to Utah in the Nineteenth Century" *Journal of Mormon History*, 36, no. 4 (2010).

Mormons immigrate to America, there are clearly competing factors that regionally focused studies neglect.

The lack of broader studies of Mormon missionary work leads to inconsistent theories about the growth of Mormonism. In America, many historians initially assumed that Mormon converts were mostly poor and illiterate. Nathan Hatch claimed that “Mormonism returned power to illiterate men such as themselves”, while Mario S. De Pillis asserted that early Mormon converts came from the lower classes.⁴⁵ These studies latched onto a handful of personal testimonies, and Mormonism’s theological criticisms of wealth. However, more recent scholarship has undermined the idea that poverty created Mormons. Scholars such as Marianne Perciaccante argues that while some towns experienced socio-economic upheaval in upstate New York, there was no significant difference between the Mormon membership rates of stable and unstable towns.⁴⁶ Mormonism flourished regardless of the economic conditions of its practitioners. Indeed most historians who cite socio-economic hardship as the core motivation for conversion make evaluations that could be applied to most Americans of the era and not specifically to Mormons. In fact, some criticisms have gone a step further. Steven J. Fleming’s study of Mormon tax records showed that in Pennsylvania, the average Mormon was three times wealthier than their non-Mormon counterpart.⁴⁷ Rather than attracting poor converts, it seems that Mormonism was instead the cause of Mormon poverty. Due to Mormonism’s doctrine of gathering, its converts often uprooted their lives at their

45 Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 121-122; Mario S. De Pillis “The Social Sources of Mormonism,” *Church History*, 37, no.1 (1968), 72, 77.

46 Marianne Perciaccante "Backlash Against Formalism: Early Mormonism's Appeal in Jefferson County" *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol 19, no. 2 (1993), 49.

47 Stephen J. Fleming, ““Congenial to Almost Every Shade of Radicalism’: The Delaware Valley and the Success of Early Mormonism” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, 17, no. 2 (2007), 131.

own expense in order to join with the other faithful saints. Then, when those gathered communities were persecuted, the ensuing expulsions compounded the financial struggle.

Meanwhile, many historians of the British mission continue to cite economic factors to explain British Mormonism's rise. Jan G. Harris observed that the bulk of the British Mormon population were working class.⁴⁸ In his thesis on Welsh Mormons, F. James Bingley Jr. described the economic upheavals of industrialisation and the rise of mobile working forces.⁴⁹ Scholars have also cited the testimonies of missionaries themselves, noting the accounts bearing witness to the intense poverty among the communities they travelled.⁵⁰ Though not all scholars accept economic explanations, it is still concerning that a theory that has been discredited in America continues to see popularity in the British field without serious evidence to justify it. Phillip A.M. Taylor in his highly influential 1966 work on British Mormon immigration recognised that it was not enough to simply note that British Mormons were poor.⁵¹ A compelling argument had to show that Mormons were poorer on average compared to the general population. He concluded that such evidence was sparse, and while many scholars have continued to cite economic factors, compelling evidence has not since surfaced.

Missing from these explanations of Mormon success is an analysis of the techniques employed by missionaries and how these were received. Though some historians have focused on one or two techniques in isolation, LDS Church historians Steven C. Harper and Reid I. Nielson are the only scholars that have constructed comprehensive theories of early

48 Harris, "Mormons in Victorians Manchester", 46.

49 Bingley, Jr., "Becoming American", 7.

50 Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 17-18.

51 Phillip A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 35.

Mormon missionary work.⁵² Harper focuses on early work in America, arguing that Mormons perfected Second Great Awakening strategies.⁵³ Reid L. Nielson identifies five key differences between nineteenth-century Mormon and Protestant missionaries. Firstly, Nielson argues that most Protestant missionaries worked in non-Christian, non-Western nations. Meanwhile, Mormons prioritised Anglo-Christian audiences. Nielson goes as far as to say that Mormons were so geared towards Anglo audiences that Mormons almost entirely neglected other fields until the twentieth century. Secondly, Nielson argues that Protestant efforts were double barreled; they aimed to spread Christian belief, but also spread ‘civilised’ western culture. In other words, Protestants spread ‘Christ and Culture’, while Mormon missionaries worked only to spread their religious beliefs. Third, Nielson argues that Mormons were far more demographically homogeneous than their Protestant counterparts. Fourth, Mormon missionary training was informal compared to the mission schooling of Protestants: some had theological training, but most learned on the job. Finally, Nielson points out that Mormons were self-financed and under the unfunded ‘Without Purse or Scrip’* doctrine: entirely unlike the funded missions of other groups.⁵⁴ Nielson does not go into great detail as to why these differences were effective. However, he summarises these changes as indicative of a decision to avoid the competitive religious markets of colonies, and instead develop a specialised strategy for Anglo-European markets where competition was relatively low.

52 Price Price Jr, “The Mormon missionary of the nineteenth century” (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1991), 304-392; David J. Whittaker, ‘Pamphleteering in an international setting’, found in “Early Mormon Pamphleteering”, Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1982; Harper, “Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace”; Reid L. Nielson “The Nineteenth-Century Euro-American Mormon Missionary Model” *Go Ye into All The World: The Growth & Development of Mormon Missionary Work*, edited by Reid L. Nielson and Fred E. Woods, (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University press, Deseret Book Company, 2012).

53 Harper, “Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace”, 3.

54 Ibid; *A small bag; a wallet; a satchel, see: Webster, Noah. “Scrip” in *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828. <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/scrip>. (last accessed: July 2017)

Harper's argument fails to adequately recognise the differences between Mormons and their competitors, while Nielson neglects similarities. In fact, accounts found in the diaries and autobiographies of Mormon missionaries conflict with both models in a number of ways. For example, while Nielson's model insists that early Mormon missionaries did not make efforts to civilise locals the way others did, missionaries working in non-Christian fields such as the Hawaiian Islands indeed report opening schools or "domesticating" locals.⁵⁵ An in-depth analysis of the Hawaiian missions unfortunately lies outside of this study, yet even in Anglo-Christian fields, one could easily argue that the effort to gather saints to America was functionally an acculturation project. On the other hand, Harper's insistence that Mormons perfected Second Great Awakening strategies conflicts with multiple accounts of both missionaries and converts that those very strategies were what drove them away from other Churches in the first place.

Understanding the specifics of Mormon missionary work requires a bottom-up approach to Mormonism. Many scholars including Nielson rely on official church advice with the assumption that these official documents accurately reflect the experience on the ground.⁵⁶ This is problematic on two counts. While Smith was the Church's theological administrator as prophet and president, it was the missionaries who spread Mormonism and developed many of the techniques. With disillusioned Methodists and Baptists manning much of the Mormon missionary force, many had already learned the preaching craft, and so possessed far more experience in spreading the gospel than their prophet. It was they who developed the complex set of techniques that presented the faith to the outside world. As anti-Mormon

55 Louisa Barnes Pratt Memoirs, "January to 18 September 1851" (1851) *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer*, edited by George Ellsworth (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), 139.

56 William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, 1957), 60-61.

movements grew, missionaries developed ways of preaching to sceptical and even hostile audiences. Meanwhile, Smith left the opening and development of the British mission in the hands of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Smith's handpicked councillors entrusted with unique administrative authority.⁵⁷ However, whether the field was America or Britain, the Church, as well as the apostles, granted missionaries significant decision-making power while they were on mission. As a result, a 'bottom up' study of missionary techniques is required in order to understand missionary work as actually performed in the field.

The largest issue facing both Nielson and Harper's model is that they fail to incorporate strategies involved in retaining Mormons. Retaining converts was one of the most important roles of early Mormon missionaries. Both scholars and theologians often talk about conversion as a moment: either a moment of religious clarity where one is born again, or the ceremonial moments that affirm one's faith such as a baptism. This static view of conversion misunderstands the fickle nature of conversion where many either lapse or are excommunicated. Even today, the LDS Church and even some historians proclaim the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to be the fastest growing religion.⁵⁸ However, the problem with this claim is that the Church only checks the increase in membership rates, without confirming whether their purported current members still identify as Mormons. This is a similar problem amongst a myriad of other religious groups that make similar claims about their fast rates of growth. Recent studies have shown that rather than growing faster than any other Church, Mormonism grows at roughly the same rate as general population

⁵⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 107: 25–27, 36–37.

⁵⁸ Whittaker "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints", 507.

growth.⁵⁹ While my research does not concentrate on contemporary Mormon conversions, it is a useful reminder that conversions are not always the complete transformation of oneself often exemplified in evangelical conversion narratives. Early Mormons were often disillusioned or disconnected from their previous Church, and it follows that some converts later left the Mormon Church as well. As a result, understanding early Mormon missionary techniques also requires understanding the techniques used to retain, and not just attract, converts.

Thesis

Responding to these scholarly gaps, this study uses Mormon personal writings to investigate the development of the full spectrum of Mormon missionary techniques across the Atlantic and to categorise these techniques into six distinct stages. America is one focus of this study because it was and still is the administrative and theological centre of Mormonism. Britain was chosen because it was the Church's most important overseas mission: not just because it attracted more converts than even America, but because the techniques developed there soon became the gold standard for all nineteenth-century Mormon missionary work. Relying primarily on diaries and autobiographies written by missionaries and converts, I aim to demonstrate how techniques developed from below. While a great deal of early missionary work was guided by Church policy, diaries of those that proselytised and those who heard and were convinced by the missionaries, reveal the development and actual implementation of techniques on the ground. I propose that many techniques were developed without any official Church direction, but became so ingrained in missionary culture that they were functionally identical to official policy. These sources even reveal examples of missionaries

⁵⁹ Rick Phillips et al., "Mormons in the United States 1990-2008: Socio-demographic Trends and Regional Differences" (Trinity College, 2008) Found at <http://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/files/2011/12/Mormons2008.pdf> (last accessed June 2017).

who ignored policy by wielding high-risk techniques that were banned by the Church; practices that cannot be found in official documents.

This thesis focuses on first generation missionary techniques from the foundation of the Church in 1830 until the completion of the transcontinental railway in 1869. Here, the first generation refers to the period where most Mormon adults, and Mormon missionaries in particular, were converts themselves rather than born into the faith. Those with Mormon parents usually converted around the same time, and in some instances converts were even the ones to introduce their parents to the faith. These diaries are particularly insightful, since it means that all missionaries studied were converts themselves. As a result, missionaries often employed techniques that they had found convincing when they converted. One thing to note is that I initially planned to only study the period up to 1860, since that would constitute a neat antebellum thirty year generation. However, since the first missionaries in Britain only arrived in 1837, an antebellum study would needlessly neglect Britain's first generation. Meanwhile, multiple scholars have identified the completion of the first transcontinental railway as a major turning point in Mormon missionary history.⁶⁰ The railway simplified missionary travel and convert migration displacing many of the techniques developed in the context of circuit preaching and relative isolation. Though 1869 pushes the boundaries of what we would call a first-generation period, I only reference veteran missionaries who were still serving and driving policy.

This investigation of missionary techniques gives particular attention to methods that missionaries deployed in order to retain those that had already converted. Comparing missionary techniques to retention mechanisms theorised by sociologists who assume that

⁶⁰ Sebastian Lecourt "The Mormons, the Victorians, and the Idea of Greater Britain" *Victorian Studies*, 56, no. 1 (2013), 92; Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 49-51.

religious affiliation is a rational choice by its members, we indeed find that Mormonism's successful techniques fit within sociologist Rosebeth Moss Kanter's 'Commitment Mechanisms'.⁶¹ Furthermore, the Mormon efforts to maintain strong social ties to the Church helped keep the 'social capital', which Rodney Stark and Roger Finke claim is one of the more important factors that stop someone from converting to another religion.⁶² In many instances, general proselytising techniques held dual purposes for both acquiring new converts and retaining old ones. However, other techniques, particularly when it came to methods for exerting authority and distributing discipline, were designed almost solely for retention.

This study does not just identify early Mormon missionary techniques, but categorises the myriad of early Mormon techniques and their varying manifestations into six stages.

1: Travelling

2: Attracting audiences

3: Preaching

4: Further questioning

5: Divine proof

6: Retention

I use the term *techniques* to refer to the regular actions missionaries took in service to those overarching strategies. According to this model, a technique does not have to be a conscious

61 Rosabeth Moss Kanter "Commitment and Social Organization: A Study of Commitment Mechanisms in Utopian Communities" *American Sociological Review*, 33, no. 4 (1968), 499-517.

62 David Lehmann, "Rational Choice and the Sociology of Religion" *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, edited by Bryan S. Turner, (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2010).

plan on the part of a missionary: even acts that unintentionally align with strategies are still considered techniques. As we will see below, missionaries were not always aware of the effect their actions (or inactions) had on their mission.

It is worth noting that while these stages have a clear order, the order in which converts experienced these stages sometimes varied. This model outlines the usual path missionaries brought their converts along. But depending on circumstances, stages may have been reordered, amalgamated with other stages, or skipped entirely. In fact, since at any given time potential converts were at varying stages, missionaries juggled techniques from several stages at once. Ultimately, the overarching process was still a comprehensive set of techniques that guided missionaries from before they had even met converts, until long after their audiences had converted.

Sources

Missionary diaries, whether they be American or British, are mostly sampled from Brigham Young University's 'Mormon Missionary Diaries collection'.⁶³ Their own selection criteria proves useful for my purposes. For one, they selected diaries based on whether they depicted mission life and activities or made active reference to specific places, missions, missionaries, and converts. As a result, we can avoid the problem faced by previous generations of historians who dismissed diaries as too numerous to be pertinent.⁶⁴ Furthermore, because many diaries include names of missionaries and converts, I am able to cross reference accounts. I was originally concerned that diarists who undermined the faith may have been quietly disqualified from the collection. It is hard to know whether any such culling took

⁶³ Mormon Missionary Diaries collection, Brigham Young University, URL: <https://lib.byu.edu/collections/mormon-missionary-diaries/> (last accessed June 2017).

⁶⁴ Ells worth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada", vi.

place. However, diaries include both apostates and excommunicated members. Considering diarists included criticisms of the Church, smoking and drinking habits, and missionary techniques that actively broke official Church policy, it is reasonable to assume that silences are more likely to derive from the diarists themselves, rather than the curators. Furthermore, these sources are useful to this thesis regardless of any editorial bias: they still provide an insight into missionary experiences and the way their techniques developed in different local circumstances.

Amongst the British and American diaries in the digitized collection, twenty-one authors wrote forty diary volumes within the period of my study. However, I intend to supplement this section with the diaries and autobiographical works of influential Mormon preachers not found in the collection such as Parley Parker Pratt and Benjamin Brown.

Unlike missionaries, converts accounts have not been collected into regional groups. The only exception I am currently aware of is the collection of Welsh Mormon sources.⁶⁵ As mentioned already, many autobiographies were selected based on the names of converts found in actual missionary accounts, as comparing accounts of the same experience from both the point of view of the convert and missionary provides a well-rounded insight into missionary techniques and their effects. Other accounts are taken from the Book of Abraham Project's database of over 170 'Journals, Diaries, Biographies, Autobiographies and Letters of Some Early Mormons and Others Who Knew Joseph Smith, Jr. and/or His Contemporaries.'⁶⁶ These accounts are mostly American converts writing about the Joseph

65 Ronald D. Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings from 1844 to 1862, A Historical Bibliography*, (Salt Lake City: Book Craft Inc. 1988).

66 "Journals, Diaries, Biographies, Autobiographies and Letters of Some Early Mormons and Others Who Knew Joseph Smith, Jr. and/or His Contemporaries." URL: <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/> (Last Accessed June 2017).

Smith era (1830-1844), however there are some early British converts included as well. These early converts witnessed missionary techniques in their infancy, and so I have selected about forty of these sources on the basis that they are written by Mormons and contain accounts of their conversion. Finally, I have also selected various key sources on the basis of their extensive explanation of their experience with Mormon missionaries, including some of those found in the “Life Writings of Frontier Women” book series.⁶⁷ Four of the life writings volumes in this series are of women who were either British converts, or the wives of prominent British missionaries.

Methodology

In discussing how I approach Mormon diaries, it is worth explaining what I think they are not. Due to Mormonism’s proximity to the Second Great Awakening, scholars often associate Mormon personal writings with the nineteenth-century conversion narratives exemplified by evangelical accounts.⁶⁸ However, Mormon narratives do not seem to fit into these structures.

Evangelical conversion narratives are often classified into specific stages, which almost invariably begin with a description of the convert’s previous life of ‘sin’.⁶⁹ Despite one compilation of a wide range of nineteenth-century American conversion narratives claiming that, “most conversion narratives follow a predictable three-part structure— Early sinful life, the conversion experience, [and] life and works after conversion”, the Mormon example used

⁶⁷ 'Series: Life Writings of Frontier Women' Librarything, URL:
<https://www.librarything.com/series/Life+Writings+of+Frontier+Women> (Last Accessed June 2017).

⁶⁸ Martha Sonntag Bradley, ““Seizing Sacred Space”: Women's Engagement in Early Mormonism” *Dialogue: A journal of Mormon Thought*, 27, no. 2 (1997), 57-70; James Craig Holte, *The Conversion Experience in America A Sourcebook on Religious Conversion Autobiography*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1992), vii-viii; Eric A Eliason “Toward the Folkloristic Study of Latter Day Saint Conversion Narratives” *BYU studies*, 38, no. 1 (1999), 137-150

⁶⁹ Bradley “Seizing Sacred Space”, 61.

is from Anne Eliza Young: a narrative of a woman who left, rather than converted to, Mormonism.⁷⁰ Though there would surely be some exceptions, I have found that Mormon accounts do not tend to assert that they led a previously sinful life. It is telling that scholars struggle to find Mormon narratives that fit the usual structure. Instead of a sinning life where the convert claims they paid little or no attention to religion, most Mormon narratives claim the exact opposite: they were intensely religious, were constantly searching for the right church, and were curious and excited when they heard of this new church that sounded like it might satisfy their long-term dissatisfaction with their religious options. Most Mormon narratives also tell a very different story to the usual intense spiritual moment of clarity that defines the ‘conversion experience’. Instead, missionary diaries reference extended periods of ‘reasoning’, or ‘expounding’ on the Bible that are quite unlike the kinds of moments we often describe as being ‘born again’.⁷¹ Mormon conversion narratives likely differ from the usual structure, because Mormonism was specifically attractive for those that rejected the Second Great Awakening. While the usual narrative made sense in the midst of churches battling to rechurch Americans, the Mormon emphasis on long term disaffiliated religiousness, followed by careful investigation into this new Church reflects the story of those who were disillusioned by the Awakening.

Mormons authors were primarily interested in leaving a legacy for their immediate offspring. Louisa Barnes Crosby for example, explained in her life writings that she wanted to leave something for her daughters, something she herself never had:

The reason which urges me most to this undertaking is I have been many years separated from my mother, whom I loved with a pure heartfelt devotion and her

⁷⁰ Holte, *The Conversion Experience in America*, 215-222.

⁷¹ Steven C. Harper, “Infallible Proofs, Both Human and Divine: The Persuasiveness of Mormonism for Early Converts” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, 10, no.1 (2000), 104.

memory I this day revere no less than the spirit palpitating in my veins. Often when mourning that separation have I wished, O! how ardently, that she had bequeathed to me her own biography!... All I have of her writings are a few letters addressed to me during an absence from home...And now, judging of the feelings of my daughters from my own for my parents, I am determined to leave for their satisfaction a portion of my history. I shall aim at nothing more than the simple relation of facts.⁷²

Early Mormons, either due to persecution, gathering, or a call to mission, were often moving. With such moves came regular family separations, so it is understandable that we are left with a generation of authors reaching out to their family and friends.

Diaries are the driving force of this study, but their interpretation is complex. Personal writings of missionaries offer a window into the techniques missionaries used, while convert narratives illuminate which techniques made lasting impressions. However, personal writings do not offer an entirely honest view of their author's mind. As scholar Irina Paperno pointed out, diaries are only written *as if* the author is the only intended reader and is being entirely honest.⁷³ In reality, diaries in general and indeed Mormon diaries in particular, were written with the knowledge that they would be shared with intimate relations or read by future generations.⁷⁴ Unfortunately, Mormon scholars have taken these sources at face value to an alarming degree. A much more critical and subtle approach to Mormon personal writings is required. For example, Steven C. Harper used diaries when modelling early Mormon missionary work. However, he uncritically accepts the diarists' insistence that jealousy drove anti-Mormonism. Harper argues that Mormonism received its first real negative attention after other churches discovered that Mormons were using their own techniques against them

72 Louisa Barnes Pratt, "Authors Preface" 1852, found in *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer*, edited by George Ellsworth (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), XXVII.

73 Irina Paperno "What Can Be Done with Diaries?" *Russian Review*, 63, no. 4 (2004), 565.

74 *Ibid.*, 564.

and stealing their flocks.⁷⁵ This narrative totally neglects the Mormon preachers' hostility towards their non-Mormon counterparts. Mormon preachers looked at the funding of non-Mormon preachers and their 'hysterical' emotional whipping with disgust. It is no mistake that Mormons called all non-Mormons gentiles: all other churches were so corrupt that they could no longer be recognised as Christian. This is not an issue of lying diarists as much as a tendency of historians to take diarist observations at face-value.

Furthermore, the current reading of Mormon diaries neglects the silences in their pages. In many instances, what diarists either deliberately or accidentally leave out is of more significance than what they actually articulate. Diaries from women in polygamous households, for example, often avoided discussing the other 'sister wives' and sometimes completely omit them from existence.⁷⁶ The distinct lack of discussion about polygamy from both male and female diarists may illuminate the general attitude toward the doctrine more than the handful of diarists that wrote their passionate defences of the doctrine.⁷⁷

Chapter Outline

The first chapter will outline the evolution of the first five missionary stages in America, where most techniques originated. Comparing Mormon techniques to those used by their competitors, this chapter seeks to answer not just what techniques early Mormon missionaries used, but how Mormon techniques were borrowed, diverged, or stood in contrast from other

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ *No Place to Call Home: The 1807-1857 Life Writings of Caroline Barnes Crosby, Chronicler of Outlying Mormon Communities*, edited by Edward Leo Lyman, Susan Ward Payne and S. George Ellsworth (Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005), 4. - *The editors found that Caroline Crosby's diary never mentioned her brief time with polygamy*

⁷⁷ Paula Kelly Harline, *The Polygamous Wives Writing Club: From the Diaries of Mormon Pioneer Women*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

churches. Though some techniques covered here may seem insignificant or even redundant, they formed the basis for later techniques important to the British mission.

The second chapter analyses the first five stages of Mormon missionary techniques as they manifested in Britain. How did the British religious context influence what techniques were used? How were they adapted, and how did the British mission affect the Church's character? Considering the structure of the mission, there is compelling reason to believe that it was the British mission, not the American one, that formed the structural basis of most nineteenth-century Mormon missions.

Finally, the third chapter investigates retention strategies: the sixth stage of missionary work. Many techniques explored earlier seemed to have dual purposes for both non-Mormon and Mormon audiences, therefore making them conversion and retention techniques simultaneously. Furthermore, the wider community based roles missionaries took on bring up questions about whether or not missionaries would more accurately be referred to as 'community leaders'. In particular, this chapter investigates the disciplinary roles missionaries performed, and the way these roles managed the behaviour and maintained the faith of converts and fellow missionaries. Perhaps counter-intuitively, one of the most important strategies used to retain converts seems to have been the threat of excommunication.

Chapter 1: American Mormons and the Development of Missionary Techniques

Wandle Mace was one of hundreds of early Mormons who recorded his time as a missionary. Like so many others, his diary illuminates the complex techniques missionaries utilised. Arriving at a small New York town in the late 1830s, Wandle recalled that, “all crowded around to look at me as though there was some peculiarity about a ‘Mormon’ that was not about any other person.”¹ They wanted to see the ‘Golden Bible’ of Mormonism. But like most missionaries, Wandle did not carry any copies. He and his mission partner then visited a man afflicted with rheumatism, who when, “He heard the gospel and believed...was administered to in the name of Jesus Christ and was fully restored to health.”² Soon afterwards the missionaries held a meeting to preach, though not without some clashes with the local Methodist ministers.³

Early American Mormon missionary diaries like Wandle Mace’s provide an overarching view of what techniques Mormons used. These diaries also allow us to compare Mormon techniques to those of other Second Great Awakening preachers. Some techniques were outright stolen from their competitors, some were re-appropriated with a new Mormon angle, while other techniques were innovations of the missionaries’ own making. Such comparisons also broaden our understanding of Mormonism’s relationship with the Second Great Awakening as a whole. It would be impossible to cover every single technique missionaries

1 Wandle Mace “Autobiography of Wandle Mace” 1846, *Book of Abraham Project collection of Journals, Diaries, Biographies, Autobiographies and Letters of Some Early Mormons and Others Who Knew Joseph Smith, Jr. and/or His Contemporaries* (hereafter referred to as 'Book of Abraham Project') <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/WMace.html> (accessed July, 2016).

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

used. However, based on my reading of missionary diaries I have arranged techniques into five broad strategic stages:

1: Travelling

2: Attracting audiences

3: Preaching

4: Further questioning

5: Divine proof

It is important to note that missionaries also developed retention techniques, however, this sixth stage will be explored in a later chapter.

Stage 1: Travelling

Inspired by the Methodist circuit riders and the Baptist farmer-preachers of the era, Joseph Smith declared in 1832 that all missionaries were to be unfunded:

...For I suffered them not to have purse or scrip,* neither two coats. Behold, I send you out to prove the world, and the laborer is worthy of his hire. And any man that shall go and preach this gospel of the kingdom, and fail not to continue faithful in all things, shall not be weary in mind, neither darkened, neither in body, limb, nor joint; and a hair of his head shall not fall to the ground unnoticed. And they shall not go hungry, neither athirst. Therefore, take ye no thought for the morrow, for what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed.⁴

Known as going ‘Without Purse or Scrip’, Mormon missionaries took literally the commandment of travelling with little means. On a theological level, the preachers’ wandering imitated the myths of the ancient Christian apostles who Jesus mentions he sent

⁴ Doctrines and Covenants (D&C), 84; see also D&C 78-81.

off “without purse, and scrip, and shoes”.⁵ As historian Rex Thomas Price Jr. observed, Mormon missionaries strove to continue the work of the first Christians, whom they saw as their literal ancestors.⁶ Historian Richard T. Hughes argued that Mormons promoted their own brand of ‘experiential’ primitivism during debates.⁷ Primitivism, or Restorationism, is a belief held by various Christian movements that proper observance required restoring aspects of the primitive church of the apostles.⁸ These aspirations were so common during the Second Great Awakening, that primitivism could even be considered one of the era’s defining features. Hughes argued that Campbellites restored practices of the early Church (ecclesiastical primitivism), while some preachers let go of all their wealth in order to mimic the early teachings of sacrificial service to ones neighbour (ethical primitivism).⁹ Meanwhile, Mormons articulated their own form of primitivism which looked to restore a direct relationship with God through prophecy, healing through faith, or speaking in tongues. Historian Jan Shipps has also observed an equally important phenomenon, namely that the early Mormon Church recreated many of the Bible’s events.¹⁰ Indeed Mormons such as Louisa Pratt clearly saw themselves as the new Israelites. After the 1844 lynching of Joseph Smith and the subsequent expulsion from Nauvoo, Louisa wrote that her, “mind wandered to

5 Luke 22:35 KJB

6 Rex Price Jr, “The Mormon missionary of the nineteenth century”, (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1991), 26.

7 Richard T. Hughes, “Historical Models of Restoration,” in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, edited by Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnivant and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 637.

8 Richard T. Hughes, “Historical Models of Restoration” 635; Kenneth R. Walters, Jr. “Why Tongues? The History and Philosophy Behind the Initial Evidence Doctrine in North American Pentecostal Churches” (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2010), 135.

9 Hughes, “Historical Models of Restoration”, 635-638.

10 Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of A New Religious Tradition*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

the poor Jews, when they were compelled to leave the beloved city.”¹¹ This Mormon belief in what could be called historical primitivism is perhaps best captured by the Mormon historian Leonard J. Arrington’s book title: *Brigham Young: American Moses*.¹²

Travelling ‘Without Purse or Scrip’ therefore granted the preachers a sense of biblical authenticity, and even though audiences did not seem to appreciate the primitivist purity of the doctrine, it had practical effects as well. Missionaries could spread quickly and at minimal cost, which allowed the upstart church to quickly compete with established circuit riders. For inexperienced missionaries, the unfunded lay preaching lifestyle was a figurative baptism by fire that forced them to acquire and hone their preaching skills.

Missionary diaries focus on their author’s physical journeys much more than their spiritual ones. With great pride, early preachers documented the hardships they faced out in the field. Missionary Henry Green Boyle even set aside the front page of his diary as a running document of how far he travelled throughout each leg of his mission.¹³ Wilford Woodruff’s adventurous tales in particular exemplify the ‘Purse or Scrip’ doctrine in action. In 1834, Wilford Woodruff did not know that he would rise to the ranks of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and John Taylor as the fourth President of the Church in 1889. In 1834 he was but another fresh convert who had heard, accepted and then vowed to spread Mormonism within a four day period. When he was asked to proselytise through Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee

11 Louisa Barnes Pratt “Memoirs, Fall 1841 to Spring 1846” (1850) in *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer*, edited by George Ellsworth (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), 76.

12 Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

13 Henry Green Boyle, “January 03, 1855” *Boyle, Henry Green vol. 01*, 1855, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

and Kentucky, he and his companion Elder Harry Brown departed without any money as they “felt strenuous to keep the commandments”.¹⁴

Having never preached before, Woodruff recalled how he learned from his experienced companion, and was soon preaching the gospel himself. Meanwhile, student and teacher travelled together through the American wilderness. He gave extensive accounts of the physical journeys they undertook. Building their own canoe, they travelled 125 miles down the Arkansas River. Later, they abandoned the canoe:

...and started to wade the Mississippi swamp, which was mostly covered with water from Little Rock, Arkansas, to Memphis, Tennessee, a distance of about one hundred seventy-five miles. We waded through mud and water knee-deep, day after day, and in some instances forty miles per day, before we could get a stopping place.¹⁵

According to Woodruff, his companion abandoned him in the swamps, but he nonetheless traversed the southern countryside, continuing to preach; he was eventually ordained an Elder and baptised an estimated 70 persons over six months.¹⁶

These adventurous travels often left preachers sleeping out in the elements, but a missionary who found a place to preach could often acquire free lodgings. Throughout the Second Great Awakening, preachers of all churches were regularly perceived as a pious or educational form of entertainment.¹⁷ As a result, Mormons made unlikely alliances with innkeepers who were happy to host Mormons in order to attract more customers. The veteran preacher Parley Parker Pratt writes that when he would stay at an inn the landlord would, “offer to have the

14 Wilford Woodruff “History of Wilford Woodruff,” *Millennial Star* 27 (1865)

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Steven C. Harper, “Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace: Mormon Proselyting in the 1830s” *Journal of Mormon History*, 24, no. 2 (1998), 12.

bell rung and the people assembled”.¹⁸ Pratt would then “make known our calling, pray with, or preach to them.”¹⁹ The landlord would invite Pratt to come and stay again, each time refusing to give him a bill.

Once Mormons established themselves in a region, the missionaries would begin setting up informal circuits. In a Kentucky conference in 1836, one year after Woodruff’s adventures through rivers and swamps, the now experienced preacher ordained several converts as Elders, including a young Abraham Owen Smoot.²⁰ Smoot would later hold a number of important positions, including mayor of Salt Lake City. The Elders travelled two by two, over what Woodruff called “a circuit of several hundred miles”.²¹ Like other Mormon missionary diaries, Smoot outlines who they visited and the distance they travelled to get there. Each day, Smoot “walked 16 miles” or “rode 30 miles” to fill appointments, usually visiting a Mormon house-hold.²² From March to April 1836, Smoot managed to hold a meeting almost every evening while still managing to travel a total of nearly 250 miles during that period.²³

Smoot’s diary also reveals a system of lay-preaching that enabled Mormons to travel widely while remaining without Church funding. More often than not, the missionaries stayed in the houses of those hosting their preaching. Smoot notes at least twenty different Mormon households that he stayed in during this period. Preachers slept and ate due to the hospitality

18 Parley Parker Pratt “Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt” 1874 (posthumous), Book of Abraham Project, <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/PPPratt.html> last (accessed January, 2016).

19 Ibid.

20 Wilford Woodruff “History of Wilford Woodruff”.

21 Ibid.

22 Abraham Owen Smoot “Diary Entry, April 05” Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, 1836, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

23 Abraham Owen Smoot “March 13 - April 13” Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, 1836 - Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

of their fellow Mormons, and in some cases were given money to cover their expenses.²⁴ The missionaries were unwaged and proud of it, but did not consider monetary gifts in violation of their ‘Without Purse or Scrip’ doctrine. This layfunding network had multiple positive impacts. It did not just increase the potential reach of missionaries, but helped retain current converts through close engagement as well.

Another benefit of the travelling style was that they sometimes found audiences reserved for other circuit riders. The more resourceful and lucky of the missionaries found themselves filling the appointments left open by circuit preachers behind schedule. Abraham Smoot for example, wrote that, “a Cambpelite [sic]... Meeting was not attended by the Minister”.²⁵ Amos Fuller did not just preach in a Methodist meeting house, but was subsidised as well, writing that they “gave me 19 cents”.²⁶ Though themes of intense sectarian competition often surround historical evaluations of the Second Great Awakening, these entries show that sectarianism was not universal. Ultimately, travelling ‘Without Purse or Scrip’ succeeded because of how easily it fit within the existing lay-preaching culture of the era.

Stage 2: Attracting audiences

This second stage concerns any technique that missionaries used to attract audiences to them. These can range from Mormons simply announcing their intention to preach, to advertising their sessions via handbills. Apart from outlining these various methods, this section investigates the strange role the Book of Mormon played in attracting audiences. In

24 Doyle Lee “March 08, 1841” Lee, John Doyle vol. 1, 1840-1841, 1841, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; Amos Fuller “August 30, 1837” Fuller, Amos Botsford vol.1 1837, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

25 Abraham Owen Smoot “April 13”, Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, 1836 - Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

26 Amos Fuller “August 30, 1837” Fuller, Amos Botsford vol.1, 1837 L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

particular, the Book of Mormon seemed to gather many an audience, even though missionaries seemed to make a point of not utilising it in this way.

After developing successful methods to reach potential converts, Mormons required ways to attract audiences. Most audiences were encouraged to seek out missionaries by the rumours they heard about the Book of Mormon.²⁷ Mormons simply announced their intention to preach. Bolder preachers even went to the meetings of other denominations and advertised their own preaching sessions there.²⁸

Most Mormons assumed that audiences were clamouring to hear them speak. Even in the face of persecution and mob violence, they were confident that any open-minded person would embrace the faith. When they were barred from preaching in public areas, missionaries concluded that it must have been their competitors who were inciting hostility. Believing that, despite the influences of opposing preachers, the general public were ultimately sympathetic, missionaries opted to preach directly out on the street.²⁹ When Abraham Smoot was snubbed by the other preachers at a Methodist camp meeting in Illinois, he maintained, “that every eye was attracted to him as if he was an unknown creature in their midst.”³⁰ Disappointed with the response he continued to attend the camp meetings, but Abraham was sure that without competition from the Methodist leaders he would have found a receptive audience.

Missionaries Jesse Crosby and Benjamin Brown wrote of a more potent brand of anti-Mormonism during their 1844 travels, both explaining with exciting detail the heckling,

27 Harper, “Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace”, 11-12.

28 John Doyle Lee, “February 24, 1841” Lee, John Doyle vol.1, 1840-1841, 1840 L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

29 Harper, “Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace”, 11.

30 Abraham Owen Smoot “September 11 1841” Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, 1836 - Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

arrests, and even mob attacks and shootings they encountered. Jesse's narrative in particular blames the jealousy and fears of competing preachers for inciting mob violence. By virtue of the fact they had cast themselves as the descendants of the early Christian apostles, Mormon preachers like Jesse viewed their opponents as modern day equivalents of the Pharisees and other rejecters of Christ. Historian Jann Shipps observed that early Mormonism often replicated the changing relationship between early Christianity and Judaism.³¹ Indeed, Jesse's rhetoric seems to support this idea. Jesse claimed that the 'purseless' Mormons threatened "hireling" priests who "laboured to save their craft".³² In other words, Jesse suggested that preachers opposed Mormonism in order to protect their occupation, rather than out of genuine spiritual disagreement. Jesse even called his opponents Pharisaical, meaning it far more literally than the common insult at the time that they expressed public but insincere religiosity.³³ It is telling that Jesse would refer to 1844 opponents of Mormonism as Pharisees, when Joseph Smith was attacked and 'martyred' that very same year. Jesse paints Joseph Smith as Christ, his opponents as the Pharisees, and missionaries like himself as the apostles working to spread the new teachings. Ultimately, the belief in word of mouth was driven by the naïve belief that Mormonism was universally appealing. However, missionaries soon developed savvier methods to attract audiences.

Looking at convert accounts, it is clear that the natural fascination that did exist stemmed from the Book of Mormon. Audiences had heard rumours about the Book of Mormon and flocked to hear more about this 'Golden Bible', even when the early stories they had heard

31 Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of A New Religious Tradition*, 46-48.

32 Jesse Crosby, "The history and Journal of Jesse Wentworth Crosby" 1869, Book of Abraham Project; Webster, Noah. 'Hireling'. *American Dictionary of the of the English Language*, 1828.
<http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/hireling>. Webster's Dictionary.

33 Webster, Noah. "Pharisaicalness" in *American Dictionary of the of the English Language*, 1828,
<http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/Pharisaicalness> (last accessed august 2017)

were sceptical. During the ‘Laminite’ mission of 1830-1831, Parley P. Pratt, Peter Whitmer Jr., Oliver Cowdery and Ziba Peterson preached through Missouri and Ohio. Intending to convert Native Americans, the missionaries instead found so much success with the white settlers of Kirtland, Ohio and the surrounding area that it eventually became the Mormon base of operations. Philo Dibble, who lived nearby, recalled that some travellers told him that: “four men had come to Kirtland with a Golden Bible and one of them had seen an angel... [they] informed me that They laughed and ridiculed the idea, but I did not feel inclined to make light of such a subject...On my return home I told my wife what I had heard.”³⁴ Still curious the next day, Philo’s wife proposed that they travel to Kirtland to seek out these men for themselves. Philo was soon convinced by preachers and baptised by Parley Parker Pratt.³⁵

In fact, most converts followed a fascinating trend. Like Dibble, they would hear of the Book of Mormon and would then seek out more information from missionaries, but ultimately converted without ever mentioning reading the Book that started their search in the first place. Take for example the autobiography of Lyman Omer Littlefield. Recalling his family’s conversion:

*A golden bible--the rumor said--had been taken out of the earth in the western portion of New York State by a young man named Joseph Smith, who said an angel of the Lord had revealed it to him...This strange rumor became the topic of much talk and wonderment through that part of the country...two Mormon Elders came to our neighborhood and held meetings. Of course we knew they were followers of Joseph Smith, whom rumor had associated with the golden Bible matter concerning which we had heard in the state of New York. Naturally enough we felt a curiosity to see these strange men and hear more concerning their new religion.*³⁶

34 Philo Dibble, “Autobiography of Philo Dibble” in *Book of Abraham Project* (1843).

35 Ibid.

36 Lyman Omer Littlefield, *Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints* (Logan, Utah: The Utah Journal Co., 1888).

What is surprising is how little missionaries actually drew upon the Book of Mormon. The Book was useful for drawing audiences, even as missionaries did little with its contents when preaching. Church historians John P. Livingstone and Richard E. Bennett have argued that many accounts show that the Book of Mormon was central for the missionary who used it and the converts who read it.³⁷ But while their case studies discourage a complete dismissal of the Book of Mormon, I find it difficult to agree that the Book of Mormon was a “powerful instrument of conversion”.³⁸ Out of all twelve of their case studies, only four actually depict people reading the book. The above accounts of both the Dibble and Littlefield’s conversions show examples of people seeking out the Mormons because of the Book of Mormon, but not actually reading it before conversion. In fact, historian Rex Thomas Price Jr. concluded that Mormon missionaries preached “about the book, not from it”.³⁹ Accounts of missionaries and converts illuminate a combination of the arguments presented by Livingstone and Bennet, as well as Price Jr.: the Book of Mormon clearly attracted audiences for missionaries, but missionaries themselves were not distributing copies or preaching from its pages.⁴⁰ In fact,

37 John. P Livingstone and Richard E. Bennet, “Remember the New Covenant, Even the Book of Mormon” (D&C 84:57)” in *Go Ye into All The World: The Growth & Development of Mormon Missionary Work*, edited by Reid L. Nielson and Fred E. Woods (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University press, Deseret Book Company, 2012), 45-46.

38 Ibid., 61; *Preach My Gospel* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004).

39 Rex Price Jr summarises the book of Mormons used by missionaries thusly in “The Mormon missionary of the nineteenth century”, (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1991), 312.

40 Ibid., 312.

most missionaries did not discuss the Book of Mormon unless they were responding to direct questions.⁴¹

My research indicates that the Book of Mormon was neglected by the first generation of missionaries for three reasons. First, limited publication made distributing the Book of Mormon impractical. Second, controversies made the Book a liability in the hands of uninitiated readers with the words of Mormonism's critics in the back of their minds. Finally, missionaries themselves did not believe that the Book of Mormon was a powerful tool of conversion. Though the Book of Mormon attracted audiences, missionaries would then convince those audiences using their own skills.

Though the modern reader might view its story of an ancient Jewish civilisation in America as a wild tale concocted from oblivion, the Book of Mormon joined a long tradition depicting America as a biblical utopia.⁴² Peter M. Chidester proposed that such a tradition provided a spiritual dimension to people's belief in America's manifest destiny: if Americans were a special people, their religion would be so too. The famously critical scholar of Mormonism, Fawn Brodie, even proposed that Joseph Smith hoped to maximise the book's popular appeal and increase its sales by capitalising on pseudo-archaeological trends.⁴³ Indeed, the diary of Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith's brother, read less like that of a preacher and more like an

41 This is certainly a far cry from today's LDS missionaries, who apart from possessing an overwhelming number of copies of the Book of Mormon to distribute, are recommended a plethora of excerpts to encourage potential converts to study. For example, see: "Book of Mormon Reaches 150 Million Copies" *LDS Church News*, 20th April 2011 <https://www.lds.org/church/news/book-of-mormon-reaches-150-million-copies?lang=eng> (accessed July 2016); *Preach My Gospel*, 31-88.

42 This is outlined throughout: Peter M. Chidester "A Land Choice above All Others: The Importance of the American Wilderness to the Rise of the Mormon Church, 1820-1850" Ph.D. diss. (University of Connecticut, 2012).

43 Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963), 35-36.

account of book sales.⁴⁴ Though the testimonies of converts themselves show that the Book of Mormon held some appeal, it is difficult to confirm the intentions behind the Book's construction since sales were so poor.

Regardless of the intentions behind the Book's production, poor sales and lack of funding resulted in only 5000 Books of Mormon in circulation until 1837.⁴⁵ By that time, the Mormon population had grown to at least 16,000.⁴⁶ Without enough copies to distribute to each Mormon, let alone potential converts, physical copies of the Book of Mormon quickly reached the status of coveted possessions. Mary E. Lightner, an early convert who would eventually be a plural wife to both Joseph Smith and later Brigham Young, recalled in her autobiography how rare copies of the text were. Not only had many Mormons not been able to read the book themselves but, "few of the brethren had even seen it".⁴⁷ At least at first, it seems that practical issues dictated the limited missionary use of the Book of Mormon.

Multiple accounts show that even those who did access a Book of Mormon before conversion were rarely enamoured with the text. Louisa Barnes' converted sister, Caroline, visited her and explained the wonders of the faith in 1837. Seeing that Louisa was indeed interested, Caroline even left her with what was likely one of the new reprints of the Book of Mormon. But by Louisa's own admission she, "could not find time to read it through, so immersed was I in worldly cares."⁴⁸ It would be over a year after she tried reading the Book of Mormon

44 Hyrum Smith, Smith, Hyrum vol. 1, 1832-1833, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

45 Bruce Satterfield "The Publication History of the Book of Mormon" *Church News*, January 1st, 2000.

46 Tim B. Heaton, "Vital Statistics" in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, edited by Daniel H. Ludlow, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 1519.

47 "Mary E. Lightner" Autobiography of Mary E. Lightner, date unknown, Book of Abraham Project.

48 Louisa Barnes Pratt, "Memoirs, April 1831 to June 1838" (1850) *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer*, edited by George Ellsworth (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), 55.

before Louisa finally heard Mormon preachers for herself. It was those preachers that finally led her to be baptised.

Another problem was that Book of Mormon attracted crowds that were not just curious, but angry as well. Early criticism of the Church primarily focused around the flaws in the Book of Mormon's construction as well as its contents. Anti-Mormon publications such as the letters of the jilted ex-Mormon Ezra Booth accused Smith of forging the Book of Mormon, while E.D. Howe's exposé, 'Mormonism Unveiled' [sic], claimed the text was partly plagiarised from an unpublished work of fiction.⁴⁹ David J. Whittaker pointed out that anti-Mormon publications were largely the driving force behind the first Mormon missionary publications, which sought to provide answers to common questions and prepare missionaries for the common arguments hostile audiences presented.⁵⁰ Missionaries were already pushing out pamphlets to mitigate anti-Mormon attacks by the time the 1837 reprint arrived.⁵¹ In his conversion account, Orson Hyde, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote that he "came to the conclusion that it was all a fiction" when he first read the Book of Mormon out of curiosity.⁵² It took a missionary to convince him otherwise. It is understandable then why missionaries were wary of the Book of Mormon, even if avoiding it did little to quell the Church's controversial reputation in practice.

49 Eber Dudley Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, (Ohio: Telegraph Press, 1834); The nine Ezra Booth letters can be found in: *The Telegraph* (Painesville, Ohio), October 25 – December 27, except for December 13.

50 David J Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering." Ph.D. diss., (Brigham Young University, 1982), 52.

51 Ibid.

52 Orson Hyde, History of Orson Hyde, *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 26 (1864), 742-44, 760-61, 774-76, 790-92.

The conclusion that missionaries were avoiding using the Book of Mormon to attract customers brings up an obvious question: what did early Mormons use instead? One Mormon missionary, Elder S. Brannan, was quite a controversial figure in the Church. Making his fortune in the California Gold Rush, his relationship with Brigham Young deteriorated due to disagreements about tithings owed. Eventually, he left the Church, but Brannan's earlier missionary work in 1845 best encapsulated the way Mormon missionaries used the Book of Mormon.⁵³ They advertised that everything about their faith would be explained and proven

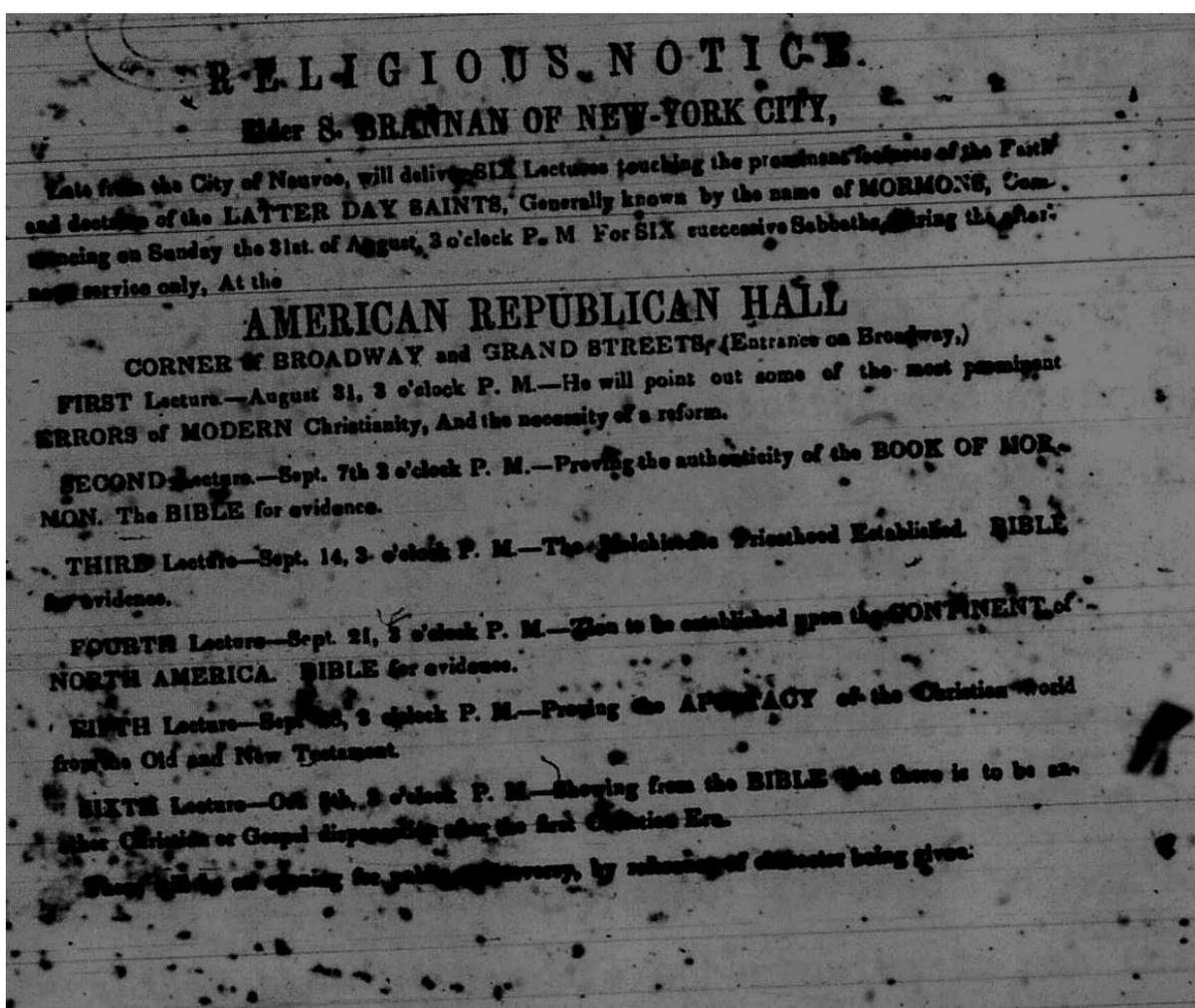


FIG.1

53 Will Bagley, "Latter-day Scoundrel Sam Brannan" *Wild West*, 21, no. 3 (2008), 60-64; Owens, Kenneth. 2012. "Far from Zion: The Frayed Ties Between California's Gold Rush Saints and LDS President Brigham Young". *California History*, 89, no. 4 (2012), 5-57.

using the audience's very own text: the Bible. One of his handbills detailing his preaching clearly show that even after the 1837 reprint, Mormons continued to talk around, but not from, the Book of Mormon.⁵⁴ Looking at Fig.1, Brannan outlines six topics in the notice, with five using the Bible as his primary evidence. In fact, even when the preaching topic was about the Book of Mormon itself, he still claimed that he would use, "the Bible for evidence".

This places the Book of Mormon in a strange but fascinating position within the missionaries' repertoire. The text was difficult to come by, a liability, and barring all else, a text that was rarely able to encourage conversion out of its readers. Still, this mysterious book drove those who had not read it to seek out missionaries and hear them preach. Church leadership strove to sell copies of the Book, yet missionaries did not see the text as a missionary tool the way their leadership did. Instead, Missionaries promised audiences that they could prove Mormonism using only the Bible. As we will see, that promise formed the strategic basis of their preaching.

Stage 3: Preaching

Naturally following techniques for attracting audiences, the next stage refers to those employed when actually preaching. It is first important to understand that Mormons usually preached the 'First Principles' on mission.⁵⁵ They are:

1. Faith in Christ.
2. Repentance.

54 See Fig.1 Samuel S Brannan "Religious Notice: Elder S Brannan of New York City" in Ellsworth, George S. "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830–1860." (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1951), 43.

55 Harper, "Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace", 26-27; Price Jr, "The Mormon missionary of the nineteenth century", 314.

3. Baptism by Immersion (pouring or sprinkling of water are insufficient).
4. Receiving the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands.

One might note that these are not particularly controversial, and hardly what one might think of as the unique features of Mormonism. In fact, these principles primarily outline what is required in order to convert. The main strategies behind Mormon preaching related more to the aggressive techniques, rather than the topics themselves.

Historians often consider the Second Great Awakening to be intensely sectarian. However, as discussed previously, Mormons were occasionally able to preach at other Church meetings. In fact, revivalists themselves often rejected sectarianism. Presbyterian preacher Charles Finney openly embraced Episcopal and Methodist methods. Finney directly discussed sectarianism in his 'Revival Lectures'. According to Finney, the worst thing one could do was target converts of other churches: "When the Baptists are so opposed to the Presbyterians, or the Presbyterians to the Baptists, or both against the Methodists, or Episcopalians against the rest, that they begin to make efforts to get the converts to join their Church, you soon see the last of the revival."⁵⁶ Instead, it was more important to get people into a church, even if it was not your own.

Mormon historian Stephen Harper argued that Finney refused to grant Mormonism the same interdenominational acceptance that he extended to other churches. He claimed that other churches demonised Mormonism once it found success stealing their flocks.⁵⁷ However, Mormon preaching techniques implicate Mormon missionaries in fostering hostilities of their own. Mormonism seemed to be inspired by a more sectarian Second Great Awakening

⁵⁶ Charles Grandison Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Company, 1835), 127.

⁵⁷ Harper, "Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace", 3-4.

thinker: Alexander Campbell. Unlike Finney, Campbell unabashedly engaged in formal public debates on theological topics, and while some of his associates were sceptical of the practice, Campbellites gained a reputation for their debating prowess.⁵⁸ Drawing on this tradition, Mormon missionaries targeted audiences already affiliated with other churches. Mormons also engaged in public debates, with the aim of proving opposing ministers (including Campbellites) wrong. Furthermore, Mormons made a point of using terms coined by other churches to describe their own theological beliefs through the use of their opponents. This was a rhetorical strategy that attempted to highlight the theological deficiencies of their opponents.

Mormon missionaries expected parts of their audiences to be sceptical or even hostile. In order to maintain a semblance of control over their meetings, missionaries were prepared to not just preach, but answer and challenge the charges of their audiences. Eager to prove and expose audiences to the hypocrisy and corruption of other ministers, Mormon preachers challenged critics to public debates. The testimonies of preachers such as Orson Hyde, Erastus Snow and Amos Fuller all illuminate the centrality of debate to Mormon preaching.⁵⁹ One of the advantages of these debates was that they drew in crowds. While on mission, Erastus Snow attended an anti-Mormon lecture about the Book of Mormon. Afterwards, Erastus and the speaker engaged in an impromptu three-hour debate. Having to finish for the

58 Holifield “Debates, Debating” in *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An International Religious Tradition*, edited by Michael W. Casey and Douglas A. Foster, (University of Tennessee press: Knoxville, 2002), 262-263.

59 Orson Hyde, *History of Orson Hyde*; Erastus Snow journal in: John. P Livingstone and Richard E. Bennet, “Remember the New Covenant, Even the Book of Mormon” (D&C 84:57)” in *Go Ye into All The World: The Growth & Development of Mormon Missionary Work*, edited by Reid L. Nielson and Fred E. Woods (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University press, Deseret Book Company, 2012), 58-59; Fuller, Amos Botsford vol.1, 1837, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; “Debate” in *Crihfield's Christian Family Library and Journal of Biblical Science* 1 (18-25 July, 1-15 August, 1842), hereafter referred to as: 'Debate'.

night, the two agreed to continue debating the next day. Erastus clearly got the crowds he was looking for:

The next day, the house was greatly thronged and some were around it by the windows outside. The house was called to order and a moderator appointed to keep order, the congregation assembly listening with great anxiety as we spoke, each an equal length of time, until twelve o'clock in the evening. I think the investigation left a lasting impression upon many of the truth of the work.⁶⁰

Erastus himself thought the crowds found him convincing, and he was not the only Mormon to claim success after a debate. Satisfied that he had trounced a Presbyterian minister in Scarborough, Orson Hyde wrote that, "About forty persons were baptized into the Church in that place immediately after the debate... It is highly probably that he has never since challenged a 'Mormon' preacher for debate."⁶¹ Both were recognised for their missionary skills: soon after his appointment to the Quorum, Snow was chosen to lead the Scandinavian mission, while Orson was sent to Jerusalem.

The actual topics of debate were ostensibly about the authenticity of Joseph Smith or the Book of Mormon, but missionaries often went off subject. Primitivist ideas drove Mormon rhetoric during debates, with Mormons attempting to turn the tables on what were supposed to be interrogations on the Church's legitimacy. Each time an opponent criticised the evidence for the Book of Mormon, the theological consistency of its contents, or the nature of its characters, Mormons responded that one would have to make a clear distinction as to why these critiques applied to the Book of Mormon but not to the Bible. In other words, Mormon debaters argued that these debates proved that their opponents did not actually believe in the Bible. When Amos Fuller challenged Presbyterian ministers to a debate, he defended attacks

⁶⁰ Livingstone and Bennet, "Remember the New Covenant", 59.

⁶¹ Orson Hyde, *History of Orson Hyde*.

on Joseph Smith by showing, “the weakness of his argument... [by] comparing the deeds of Jo Smith (as he was pleased to call him) to those committed by Moses, David and Saulomon.”⁶² Amos did not record specific criticisms, focusing instead on the fact that “the same objection could brand against the Bible”.⁶³

John D. Lee’s debates during his mission through the South illuminate many of the silences left by other missionaries. Lee recorded at least five debates in his diary. Furthermore, the Church of Christ published the two-day debates between themselves and Lee and missionary partner Alfonso Young, giving us a particularly detailed view of the arguments presented by both sides. John Doyle Lee’s missionary work has been overshadowed since he is better known for his role in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. In 1857, Mormon militia, of which Lee was a leader, attacked a wagon train passing through Utah for California, killing about 120 people. Lee was convicted and executed in 1877, just after authoring an autobiography best known for accusing Brigham Young of ordering the massacre.⁶⁴

These sources show Lee and Young fielding similar defences to the ones presented by Amos Fuller. The Church of Christ ministers Abraham Sallee and Samuel Dewhitt challenged the Mormons with intricate theological arguments. For two days, the four men vigorously debated over biblical interpretations, translations, and even tenses of individual words found in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Like Amos Fuller, Lee and Young maintained that the Church of Christ preachers could not present criticisms of the Book of Mormon that

⁶² Amos Fuller “January 10, 1838” Fuller, Amos Botsford vol.1 1837, L. TomPerry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled; or the Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee; Embracing a History of Mormonism From its Inception Down to the Present Time, With an Exposition of the Secret History, Signs, Symbols and Crimes of the Mormon Church. And the History of the Horrible Butchery Known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre* (New York: W. H. Stelle and Co, 1877).

did not also attack the Bible itself: “Mr. Sallee informs us that [Book of Mormon] Nephi exalts himself and, therefore, the Book of Mormon is not divine but, upon the same principle, we would argue that the Bible is not divine, for Paul exalts himself as much as Nephi. So much for the gentleman’s first objection.”⁶⁵

Missionaries argued that Mormonism was validated by the biblical ‘gifts of the spirit’ found in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: which records the giving of powers of wisdom, knowledge, healing, miracles, prophecy, communication with spirits, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Indeed Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier concluded that Mormon preachers found success exactly because they embraced miraculous feats as living forces that other Churches denied by comparison.⁶⁶ In rejecting the Book of Mormon, preachers like Lee argued that their opponents were not true believers, and were the same as the “Jews in the days of Christ.”⁶⁷

Mormons took their criticism even further, arguing that the rampant sectarianism of the Second Great Awakening clearly showed that God had abandoned all other churches. As Young summarised, “We know there exists many parties and much confusion in the Christian world...The Church was once perfect and united, and why is it not so now? I answer, because the professed Christians of the day deny spiritual influences. In short because they neither posses [sic] nor seek the *gifts* that the apostles and primitive Christians possessed.”⁶⁸ According to the Mormons, sectarianism occurs because most Churches deny God’s influence and miracles, and so are not guided by them. It could be proved that Churches were

65 Young, “Debate”.

66 John Greenleaf Whittier, “A Mormon Conventicle” (1847) reprinted in *Millennial Star* 10 (1848).

67 Lee, “Debate”.

68 Young, “Debate”.

denying spiritual influences since the very debates themselves consisted of Second Great Awakening Churches renouncing the prophecy of Joseph Smith and the revelation of the Book of Mormon. Alas, the Mormons never won debates since there were no Mormon moderators. Even so, Mormon missionaries always walked away satisfied that they had left a lasting impression on their audiences. Debates did seem to attract converts, including long standing and respectable believers such as Ezra Taft Benson, who served 23 years on the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He recalled only attending Mormon meetings after witnessing Sydney Rigdon defend the gifts of the gospel in a debate.⁶⁹

Another important technique used by missionaries was their re-appropriation of the rhetoric of other Second Great Awakening churches. When not preaching about ‘First principles’, missionaries often record preaching about ‘the dispensation of the fulness of our times’, while occasionally noting that their opponents had ‘a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof’. Neither of these phrases originates from Mormonism, but from their revivalist competitors. These writings reveal that early Mormon Missionaries borrowed and repurposed the phrases and rhetoric of their competitors in order to appeal to audiences, while giving them a new theological twist that criticised the church of the audience in question. Of course, it was not unique for one church to criticise another, but this technique is less about rejecting, and more about embracing the theology of other churches. In other words, rather than rejecting the theology of other churches, it is somewhat unusual to claim that your church is a truer embodiment of their beliefs compared to the church it came from.

⁶⁹ Ezra Taft Benson “Autobiography of Ezra Taft Benson” Book of Abraham Project, <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/ETBenson.html> (Last accessed 24th July).

The first stolen rhetoric was that about ‘dispensations’. Dispensation in the Bible refers to, “The method or scheme according to which God carries out his purposes”.⁷⁰ In particular, there are three major dispensations: through Abraham, through Moses, and through Jesus.⁷¹ In other words, the three eras in which God revealed new religious systems. The ‘fulness’ or final dispensation refers to the rapture: when God’s plans are completed.

Jonathan Edwards, the major puritan theologian of the First Great Awakening, made some references to ‘fulness of the times’ in a 1747 tract. However, this concept was fully developed by John Nelson Darby.⁷² Darby, an Irish cleric of Anglican origins, both developed Dispensationalism and brought it to America in 1823.⁷³ As the Second Great Awakening reached its peak, Darby found audiences eager to learn more about the coming dispensation. It was that same year that Joseph Smith claimed he had his ‘first vision’: where he prayed in the woods that year to find an answer to which of the many churches he should join. The figures of God and Jesus appeared before him, telling him that they were all false, and that he should join none of them.⁷⁴ Smith appropriated the ‘the fulness of the times’ in as early as 1830. However, he claimed that Mormonism (and therefore Smith) was the final dispensation.⁷⁵ Mormons and non-Mormons did not believe in the same dispensationalism,

70 “Dispensation” Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/dispensation> (accessed January, 2016).

71 Ibid.

72 Jonathan Edwards, *A humble attempt to promote the agreement and union of god's people throughout the world in extraordinary prayer for a revival of religion and the advancement of god's kingdom on earth, according to scriptural promises and prophecies of the last time* (Boston, Printed for D. Henschman in Cornhill, 1747).

73 Wilburn T. Stancil “The Cultural Adaptation of Apocalyptic Imagery: A Case Study” *New Blackfriars*, 80, no. 946 (1999), 544.

74 Christopher C. Jones “The Power and Form of Godliness: Methodist Conversion Narratives and Joseph Smith's First Vision” *Journal of Mormon History*, 37, no. 2 (2011), 88-114.

75 D&C 27:13.

since revivalists were not predicting the arrival of a New Testament and prophet. However, choosing to refer to the fulness of the times anyway was a strategic choice that attempted to communicate to audiences that a true Methodist, Presbyterian or Baptist would best express their faith by converting to Mormonism.

Meanwhile, references to ‘the power and form of godliness’ appeared throughout not just missionary diaries, but convert narratives as well. Quoting from 2 Timothy 3:5, both missionaries and converts claimed that their opponents or previous church, had ‘a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof.’ In other words, they criticised what they considered the superficial appearance of religious belief of those who denied the spiritual gifts of the Holy Ghost. This charge, however, was taken from the Methodist lexicon, Mormonism’s major competitor and largest source of converts.⁷⁶

John Wesley, the major founder of Methodism encouraged his followers to form ‘United Societies’ which, “having the form, and seeking the power of godliness”, prayed and studied together as well as held each other constantly accountable for each other’s belief and sins.⁷⁷ Often using the phrase in one way or another, Wesley even wrote in 1786 that he feared that Methodism might one day, “only exist as a dead sect, *having the form of religion without the power.*”⁷⁸ Christopher C. Jones, who recently identified the common usage of the phrase amongst Methodism and Mormonism, argued that nineteenth-century Methodists prided

76 Stephen J. Fleming “Congenial to Almost Every Shade of Radicalism”: The Delaware Valley and the Success of Early Mormonism”, *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, 17, no. 2 (2007), 129-164.

77 Kevin M. Watson, “The Form and Power of Godliness: Wesleyan Communal Discipline as Voluntary Suffering” 42nd Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society (Illinois: Nazarene University, 2007). http://wesley.mnu.edu/fileadmin/imported_site/wts/42_annual_meeting/papers/The_Form_and_Power_of_Godliness_Kevin_M._Watson_42nd_WTS_Meeting.pdf (accessed July 2016).

78 John Wesley, “Thoughts on Methodism” (1786) in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley Volume X: Tracts and Letters on Various Subjects*, (New York: J & J Harper, 1927), 148.

themselves on having both the form and power of godliness.⁷⁹ Even a small perusal of Methodist publications of the era clearly confirms its widespread use.⁸⁰ Jones argued that this Methodist phrase consistently appeared through the various iterations of Joseph Smith's 'first vision'.⁸¹ In one iteration, the prophet recalled studying Methodism in his youth, before proclaiming that, "They teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of Godliness but they deny the power thereof."⁸² But Jones also concluded that though Mormons were definitely challenging Methodism, Smith was heavily influenced by the theology of his major competitor. However, considering the fact that the earliest account of the First Vision was only in 1832, there is a strong case that this rhetoric is a later conscious introduction used to connect with Methodist audiences.

John Doyle Lee described his opponents as having a form of godliness in public debates while the veteran faith healer Benjamin Brown wrote that his critics, "denied the power thereof".⁸³ Convert accounts show that these criticisms would have resonated with many who eventually converted to Mormonism. Historian Marvin S. Hill argued that Mormon converts were made up of the disillusioned "casualties" of revivalism and emotionally charged conversion processes.⁸⁴ I would argue more specifically that Mormon converts were anti-revivalists disheartened by abundant passionate preaching combined with a rejection of present day prophecy or healing. Gilbert Belnap for example, expressed disillusionment by

79 Jones, "The Power and Form of Godliness".

80 *The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review*, edited by S Luckey and G. Coles (July 3, 1837).

81 Jones, "The Power and Form of Godliness".

82 Pearl of Great Price 1:19.

83 John Doyle Lee. "February 04, 1841" Lee, John Doyle vol. 1, 1840-1841, 1841, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

84 Marvin S. Hill "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District: Another View" *New York History*, 61, no. 4 (1980), 426.

the euphoric practices: “from the department of this people, I soon became confirmed in the belief that the ministers only appealed to the feelings or the passions of the people, at least in many instances.”⁸⁵ The claim that they appealed to ‘passions’ was almost certainly intended to be disdainful. Though historian James D. Bratt did not include Mormons in his analysis of anti-revivalist writing, it is clear that Belnap was channelling the common anti-revivalist criticism that the overly emotional zeal of revivals were shallow and vulgar.⁸⁶ The reappropriated Mormon phrase gave an expression to this disillusionment. As William Huntington recalled in his autobiography:

About 1832, I was moved upon by the spirit of God to look into the situation of the churches. I found the ordinances changed [and] the covenants broken. The fear of God was taught by [the] precepts of men. *They had a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof.* From such things, I felt my duty to turn away. I withdrew from the church [and] stood alone.⁸⁷

Huntington eventually heard the Mormons preach and found them convincing, but spent some time anxiously moving between rejecting and embracing the new faith. Though an aggressive preaching style that highlighted sectarian differences helped Mormons appeal to disillusioned audiences like Huntington, missionaries often required further techniques to sway people to conversion.

Stage 4: Further Questions

Though circumstances varied, personal visits were an important part of a missionary’s repertoire. Missionaries were often invited home by curious audience members after a preaching session. For example, Abraham Smoot “spent the night” with a “Mr Stublefield”;

85 Gilbert Belnap, “Autobiography of Gilbert Belnap” (1846) Book of Abraham Project <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/GBelnap.html> (accessed July 2016).

86 Bratt “Religious Anti-Revivalism in Antebellum America”, 69-73.

87 William Huntington, “A brief sketch of the life of William Huntington, Sr.” 1845, Book of Abraham Project <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/WHuntington.html> (accessed July 2016).

his diary reveals that he talked with him enough to conclude that Stublefield “believe[d] the Gospel” and even subscribed to “Times and Seasons”, the Mormon paper published in Nauvoo.⁸⁸ A month later, Smoot visited a Mr. Dixon, where he “investigated principles until late in the evening.”⁸⁹ A few months later, Smoot visited another family and “spent the night...in conversion”.⁹⁰ Smoot found out that some family members had engaged with the faith before, though “had not been to Meeting for 11 years”.⁹¹ Entries like these are commonly found in not just Smoot’s diary, but all missionary diaries. These accounts are vague on details, rarely elaborating on the specifics of the discussions, but there is still a clear pattern: after preaching, missionaries visited private homes to elaborate on theological points and answer queries.

There is quite a contrast between the boastful entries about preaching where-ever one could on one hand, and the bare mentions of personal visits on the other. Quite likely, this was because these personal visits were a technique unappreciated by the missionaries themselves. Personal visits simply did not invoke the same romantic notions of walking in the path of the early Christian apostles. Still, personal visits were one of the most commonly employed techniques in terms of frequency. Most missionary accounts clearly show that they visited homes more often than they preached in public.

Though the technique may seem simple, it complicates common theories of early Mormon missionary work. Scholars have sometimes depicted rapid Mormon conversion on par with

88 AbrahamOwen Smoot “December 14, 1841” Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, 1836, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

89 AbrahamOwen Smoot “January 14, 1842” Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, 1836, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

90 AbrahamOwen Smoot “May 03, 1842” Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, 1836, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

91 Ibid.

revivalism: with audiences turning convert then missionary within a couple of days.⁹² Whilst this was the case with some converts, these visits show that in many instances, missionaries and converts alike valued slow and careful consideration. But even after visits, many still continued to delay their conversions. It was at this point that missionaries brought out their final technique before baptism: they would *prove* that Mormonism had the power of godliness.

Stage 5: Divine Proof

In 1840, Gilbert Belnap travelled to Kirtland to the Mormon temple being built there. Belnap was enamoured, writing in his autobiography that it, “must have been of ancient origin as the master builder has said that the plan thereof was given by revelation from God...”.⁹³ But he did not convert immediately. Instead he, “determined at some future date to obey its principles.”⁹⁴ For the next two years, Gilbert studied Mormonism, engaged with missionaries and even defended it against his family’s criticisms. Still, he would not convert. Then one day while Belnap was bedridden by a severe injury, a Mormon Elder named Jeremiah Knight paid him a visit. The preacher and Gilbert made a deal: “if he would raise me from this bed of affliction, I would obey his gospel.”⁹⁵ Gilbert soon felt healed: two years of spiritual limbo had been broken, and he finally embraced the faith.⁹⁶

Gilbert’s spiritual journey represents that of many early converts: converts who were sympathetic to the messages of Mormons, but only swayed once they witnessed for

92 Ellsworth, “A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada”, 38-39.

93 Belnap, “Autobiography of Gilbert Belnap”.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

themselves the prophesies, speaking in tongues, healings through faith, or any other supernatural ‘gifts of the gospel’. Missionaries soon learned that they could use these gifts to coax those on the brink of conversion, but also learned that that this technique would quickly backfire if used on non-believers.

Faith healing in America was mostly a Mormon innovation. Mormons were healing through faith in as early as 1831, far before evangelical theologians fully embraced the practice in the 1880s.⁹⁷ Beforehand, faith healing was only part of the unaffiliated realm of folk magic. But faith healing was no folk magic to Mormons: it was a metaphysical truth that was documented in the Bible, yet neglected by their contemporaries. Smith permitted every Mormon, even woman, to wield this gift.⁹⁸ Faith healing was so widely adopted it became a part of everyday life. Mormon accounts are littered with testimonies of healing. When Caroline Crosby joined a mission to Tahiti in 1850, she wrote of the ability of Mormon faith to protect the group from illness:

There was one of the sister[s], viz Sister Gilbert delivered prophesy in the name of Jesus that if the camp did not seek peace and union and strive to keep the commandments of God, we should be afflicted with sickness or some other trial. But if we maintained union and the love of God in our Midst we should be abundantly blest, it was confirmed by Captain Huntington who said it was true in the name of Jesus.⁹⁹

One Mormon faith healer of note is the experienced Benjamin Brown. He performed far too many healings throughout his life to recount in this thesis, administering to the community,

⁹⁷ Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, “Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism” *Journal of Mormon History*, 37, no. 1 (2011), 4; Raymond J. Cunningham, “From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America, 1872-1892” *Church History*, 43, no. 4 (1974), 502; Heather D. Curtis, “Houses of Healing: Sacred Space, Spiritual Practice, and the Transformation of Female Suffering in the Faith Cure Movement, 1870-90” *Church History*, 75, no. 3 (2006), 600.

⁹⁸ Stapley and Wright, “Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism”, 4.

⁹⁹ Caroline Crosby, “Journal, May 7 to August 16,” in *No Place to Call Home: The 1807-1857 Life Writings of Caroline Barnes Crosby, Chronicler of Outlying Mormon Communities*, edited by Edward Leo Lyman, Susan Ward Payne and S. George Ellsworth (Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005), 61.

healing infectious wounds, poison victims, restoring sight, and when he was ill, was even healed by Joseph Smith himself. His accounts seem to be nothing short of miraculous:

I found her head, where the cancer had broken out, a dreadful sight, full of cancer worms, which were eating into the skull, three pieces of which had come out! I anointed her head with oil, and prayed the Lord in her behalf...The next time I saw her was the following Sunday, when I met her at the meeting. She pulled off her cap, and showed me her head. It was entirely healed, and the flesh was as sound as ever. She said that within half an hour after my administering to her, she felt all the pain, which had previously been intense, and, to use her expression, “like a thousand gimlets boring into her brain,” leave her entirely, and the wound healed up rapidly.¹⁰⁰

Scholars have not recognised faith healing as a force of conversion due to its limited and underground use.¹⁰¹ After a string of failed healings and public embarrassment, Joseph Smith declared in 1831 that the healing of illness by laying of hands would only “follow those that believe” and should therefore not be administered to non-believers.¹⁰² In fact, Smith neutered a series of spiritual gifts such as the hysterical visions and fits of some of his followers. After some Mormons began arguing that they too could receive prophecy, Smith maintained that though the Holy Ghost would continue to prompt believers, direct contact with God was bestowed only to the leader himself.¹⁰³ Scholars have assumed that missionaries followed the official Church position, or that any questionable instances were because they were on the brink of conversion anyway.¹⁰⁴

100 Benjamin Brown, *Testimonies for the truth a record of manifestations of the power of God, miraculous and providential, witnessed in the travels and experience of Benjamin Brown*, (London: S. W. Richards, 1853), 11-12.

101 Steven C. Harper, “Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace”, 14. James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles*, (Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, 2009), 92-93.

102 Doctrine and Covenants, 63:9.

103 Wilford Goodliffe “American frontier religion: Mormons and their Dissenters 1830-1900.” (PhD. diss., University of Idaho, 1976), 126-129.

104 Harper, “Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace”, 14-15.

My own reading of mission diaries and convert accounts suggest a different finding. It shows that even if it was not strictly allowed, faith healing still held a prominent place in the missionary's repertoire. Since healings were not private affairs, potential converts often witnessed them. Multiple accounts therefore record healings taking place either directly before or immediately after conversion. In other words, non-Mormons were healed, or were promised they would be healed, as long as they pledged to convert. In Wandle Mace's account above, he explicitly mentioned visiting "a man who had been afflicted with rheumatism for four years, being unable to do any kind of work during that time. He heard the gospel and believed, and was administered to in the name of Jesus Christ and was fully restored to health."¹⁰⁵

These accounts are not always explicit, but they still show a suspiciously close relationship between healing and conversion. On December 12, 1841, Abraham Owen Smoot visited a "Dr. Young" before eventually converting him into the faith that evening. Smoot wrote that the next morning he, "layed [sic] hands on him and rebuked the decease [sic], he was healed forwith [sic]".¹⁰⁶ We can presume that their night of conversing touched upon the powers he had to heal believers.

As with reading the Book of Mormon, faith healing only worked on those who were already enamoured by the faith. When deployed on non-believers, faith healing quickly backfired on missionaries. Oliver Huntington learned the hard way that the gifts of the spirit would not sway hostile audiences. One day after a lively sermon, some of the audience followed the preachers to the home in which they were staying. Oliver wrote, "they wanted a sign or a

¹⁰⁵ Wandle Mace "Autobiography of Wandle Mace".

¹⁰⁶ Abraham Owen Smoot "December 12 – December 13" (1841) Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, 1836, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

witness that Miracles could be done; and just then steps up a woman and testified [sic] of her being healed, and several more testified [sic] to that and other instances of the sick and lame being healed by the laying on of hands; but still they would not believe.”¹⁰⁷ Huntington wrote that his efforts only enraged the mob further. In the end, the preachers resolved to simply ignore them. Indeed it seems that Smith was right to limit the usage of faith healing, since in this situation it would have been unwise for Huntington to try demonstrating healing.

Before Louisa Barnes converted to Mormonism in 1838, her sister Lois was deathly ill in 1834. She heard rumours that a strange people known as Mormons were visiting a neighbouring town, and that they could heal through faith. She rushed there in search of the preachers she hoped would save her sister, but she discussed the purpose of her journey with some Presbyterians she met along the way. They convinced her that the Mormons were nothing more than frauds and tricksters, and she went home without the missionaries.¹⁰⁸ Lois died from tuberculosis later that year. For those not on the brink of conversion, the attraction of faith healing could not overcome anti-Mormonism. Louisa did eventually convert, but was convinced by her sister Caroline after extensive study and discussion and did not require divine proof. On the other hand, her husband Addison Pratt, a former whaler who would eventually open and serve in the Polynesian mission, was far more resistant. Eventually, he too converted after he, “resolved to go and see for himself” the Kirtland Temple and their spiritual powers.¹⁰⁹ The couple’s conversion stories perfectly demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of spiritual proof: faith healing was unable to maintain the interest of the

107 Oliver Boardman Huntington “Diary entry, October 25th” Huntington, Oliver Boardman book 4, 1846
Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

108 Louisa Pratt, “History of Louisa Barnes Pratt”, 48-51.

109 Louisa Pratt, “History of Louisa Barnes Pratt”, 56.

uninitiated Louisa, but was a powerful instrument of conversion for Addison when he was on the brink.

Jonathan Crosby, the husband of Louisa's sister Caroline, was also initially resistant to conversion. He had been thoroughly convinced of Mormonism, even repeating the common Mormon critique of revivalist preachers: "If the Bible is true, why don't you preach, teach it all alike? Why all this division in the world?" However, on the day of his baptism he,"...supposed a good many people would obey the gospel. But how disappointed I was when I found that only one young man besides myself, and four females, received their teachings."¹¹⁰ In the end, Jonathan was not baptised that day. Surprised that so few had joined the Mormons, Jonathan second guessed whether Mormonism was as obviously true as he had thought. He believed that joining the Mormons would heal his physical ailments, noting that "I had two sores on me; one was a burn, and the Spirit said, those sores will never get well if you do not obey the gospel. The sores had been on me a long time, and I could not heal them with anything I could put on them and they grew larger all the time, although quite small at first."¹¹¹ Upon being baptised on December 2nd 1833, Jonathan was not just emotionally changed, but claimed that the baptism changed him physically as well. He wrote that, "the burden left my mind and I felt free and light as air and my sores were soon healed."¹¹²

It is clear that faith healing played a major role in the Mormon conversion process, even if it was indirect and unofficial. Being something that was only used for those convinced or only promised to people on the condition that they converted, faith healing represents the final

110 Jonathan Crosby, "A biographical sketch of the life of Jonathan Crosby written by himself", 1850, Book of Abraham Project.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

effort on the part of the missionaries and the straddled line between non-Mormon and Mormon for the converts. Without a basis that believed in a logically consistent Bible, faith healing failed to capture attention for long, or would even turn people against the faith. Still, as with ignoring the Book of Mormon, faith healing is an example of missionaries going against Church leadership.

Mormon missionary diaries reveal the full breadth of techniques that Mormon missionaries employed in America, as well as the way these techniques differed from their competitors. Techniques like the 'Without Purse or Scrip' are clearly steeped in Methodist circuit riding, but were encouraged by the Church via an additional theological dimension that painted the Mormons as the modern-day apostles. Other techniques reflect the missionaries' rejection of the Church's own wishes, as seen with both use of faith healing and the non-use of the Book of Mormon when proselytising. Meanwhile, the Mormon's sectarian preaching techniques and their tendency to visit interested listeners personally, reflect the Church's opposition to revivalist practices that encouraged emotional and fast conversions. This divergence makes it difficult to argue that Mormonism embodied the Second Great Awakening era. That is not to say that Mormonism can stand entirely apart from it, since its techniques and theology are specifically adapted and responding to the era. Rather, Mormonism was a new sect that was paradoxically made up of those who wanted to end the constant foundation of new sects.

Chapter 2: Britain and the Expansion of Mormon Missionary Techniques

Mormon missionary techniques in Britain largely drew upon American strategies. The first missionaries in Britain travelled quickly, relied on locals for funds, and preached wherever they could. Still, there are questions both about what techniques changed, as well as what prompted those changes. Looking at Mormon diaries and the diaries of British born missionaries in particular, I argue that the overarching British strategy moved away from aggressive debates and preaching wherever possible. These changes were motivated by legal restraints, the local religious landscape and different economic conditions. Instead, British Mormons avoided debates, preached within Mormon majority meetings, increased the prominence of faith healing, and used publications to drive their reach or respond to critics. As the British mission at times even outgrew the American Mormon population, studying British strategies raises questions about the wider impact it had on other overseas missions as well as challenging the America-centric view of Mormonism. As we will see below, I propose that the British mission came to define nineteenth-century Mormon missionary strategies more-so than any other. Furthermore, I also propose that this transatlantic comparison reveals that Mormonism thrived in Britain more than it did in America.

Scholars of the British mission have often neglected British born missionaries. P.A.M. Taylor in his classic study: *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of Their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century*, uses ‘American’ and ‘Missionary’

interchangeably, depicting missionary work as that done by Americans.¹ Other scholars focus on key administrative or theological leaders, all of whom were American born, or at least American raised.² Even scholars that praise the British mission for training and promoting British converts rarely focus on the actual missionaries in question. In fact, apart from a handful of prominent British converts, little attention has been given to the work of the British born missionaries out in the field. In part, this neglect has likely come from the enormous focus on gathering. Scholars emphasise the ‘gathering’ of saints to such a degree that mission and gathering studies are basically inseparable.³ In other words, most scholarship on the British mission concentrates on American missionaries in positions of leadership, whose ultimate goal was to facilitate the migration of converts to America. However, concentrating on American born missionaries does not give us a complete view of the missionary work that was actually performed in Britain. Hence, British-born missionaries provide valuable insight into the mission.

1 Phillip A.M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of their British Converts in the 19th Century* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966); Reid L. Nielson, “The Nineteenth-Century Euro-American Mormon Missionary Model” edited by Reid L. Nielson and Fred E. Woods, *Go Ye into All The World: The Growth & Development of Mormon Missionary Work*, (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University press, Deseret Book Company, 2012).

2 James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles*, (Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, 2009); Jan G. Harris, “Mormons in Victorians Manchester”, *Brigham Young University Studies*, 17 (1987), 46-56; F. James Bingley, Jr “Becoming American: The Welsh Mormon Journey” (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 2010).

3 Taylor, *Expectations Westward*; Phillip A.M. Taylor “Why did British Mormons emigrate” *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 22, no. 3 (1954); F. James Bingley, Jr “Becoming American: The Welsh Mormon Journey” (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 2010); Marjorie Newton “The Gathering of the Australian Saints in the 1850s” *Brigham Young University Studies*, 27, no. 2 (1987), 67-78; William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (University of Minnesota press, Minneapolis, 1957); Helge Seljaas “Scandinavian converts and their “Zion”” *Scandinavian Studies*, 60, no. 4, (1988), 445-452; Kim B. Östman “From Finland to Zion: Immigration to Utah in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Mormon History*, 36, no. 4 (2010), 166-207; Fred E. Woods and Nicholas J. Evans “Latter-day Saint Scandinavian Migration through Hull, England, 1852-1894,” *Brigham Young University Studies*, 41, no. 4 (2002), 75-102.

The first missions to Britain were led by various members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; they were accompanied by British born Canadian residents converted during Parley Parker Pratt's 1836 mission to Toronto. In Canada, Pratt converted various British immigrants, including Joseph Fielding Smith.⁴ Back in England, Smith had a minister brother as well as two minister brothers-in-law, and after his conversion he wrote home about his new religion. In 1837, Fielding Smith, along with other British born converts John Goodson, John Snider and Isaac Russell joined Quorum members Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde along with Willard Richards in the first Mormon effort into what would turn out to be the Faith's most successful mission. The Church dreamed that their Twelve Apostles would spread the faith overseas and in doing so mimic the ancient Christian apostles. But their dream was not smoothly realised. The mission and the Quorum was plagued with casualties, arrests and apostasy.⁵ Goodson and Snyder abandoned the mission after three months with Snyder apostatising upon his return. The 1838 Missouri-Mormon War complicated the Church's overseas mission further. Quorum member David W. Patten was killed and the Church was expelled from Missouri. Soon after, Isaac Russell was excommunicated over accusations he started his own Church during the commotion.⁶

The Britain these Mormons were entering in the 1830s had experienced drastic shifts in its religious structure and landscape. Industrialisation shifted populations into larger towns and

4 Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 24-25.

5 The story of the British mission's beginning has been largely drawn from: James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles*, (Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, 2009).

6 Scott C. Esplin, "Remembering the Impact of British Missionary Isaac Russell," *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: The British Isles*, edited by Cynthia Doxey, Robert C. Freeman, Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, and Dennis A. Wright, (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2007).

cities: Wales in particular saw significant growth in mining towns.⁷ The Anglican Church was unprepared for the population changes. Individual parishes tried their best to reach out and government funded Church building projects partially closed gaps in the Church's reach, but many still felt neglected.⁸ Dissenter Churches exploded in size between 1770-1810, with Congregationalists increasing by fourfold and Methodism increasing by five.⁹ A legal assault on the Anglican Church soon followed. Dissenter groups joined the push to separate church and state in order to repeal Anglican privileges. Through the 1830s and 1840s, the Church of England decreasingly earned its namesake, including losing its monopoly on marriage in 1836.¹⁰ In response, a Church of England group known as the 'Oxford Movement' accepted that they could not appeal to everyone. Instead, they proposed that the Church should concentrate only on re-engaging the countryside. Parliament provided some assistance in this effort, but Bipartisan support for Church reform quashed any hopes that the Anglican Church would regain its legal power.¹¹ Many of these dissenters were indeed revivalists, though Charles Finney's 1849 revivalist preaching tour through Britain was not nearly as successful as he had hoped.¹² Historian Richard Carwadine speculated that this was at least in part due to a declining interest in revivalism from a decade before.¹³ Indeed by 1841, Methodism reached its peak of 4.1% of the population.¹⁴ From 1837 until 1851, Mormonism grew to

7 William Gibson, *Church, State and Society 1760-1850*, (New York: St Martins Press, 1994), 34-39.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 85

10 Ibid., 15-18.

11 Ibid.

12 Richard Carwadine, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790 – 1865* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), 134-147.

13 Ibid., 147.

14 Gibson, *Church, State and Society*, 85.

33,000 members in Britain alone in the wake of a weakened state church and an unsteady dissenter movement. However, Mormonism's own British population peaked in mid 1851, and then saw a rapid decline in the following years.¹⁵

The growth of dissenter churches and revivalism was not as evenly spread as in America.¹⁶ By 1851 much of North and West Britain, and Wales in particular, saw less than 44% of the population attend an Anglican Church.¹⁷ It was in South East Britain where Anglicanism retained its hold, and in the North West where Baptism and Methodism, along with a myriad of other dissenter Churches, found their home. With many Mormon converts in Britain coming from dissenter backgrounds, Mormonism also found most of its success in the North West. Historian Stephen J. Fleming observed that even Mormon converts in America seemed to originally hearken from North West Britain as well.¹⁸ He argues that people with dissenter background were more likely to embrace the supernatural aspects of Mormonism. The 1851 British religious census reveals that Mormonism was present in over 20% of the country, mostly in the North West.¹⁹ Still their impact was somewhat limited in the wider scope, scraping a less than 1% attendance rate of the local market share.

As in America, British Mormons criticised revivalism. However, they dropped the aggressive preaching techniques of their American counterparts. Scholars have long shown that Mormonism's claims were not nearly as radical in Second Great Awakening America as they

15 Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 20.

16 Carwardine, "Transatlantic Revivalism", XIV.

17 K. D. M. Snell and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems. The geography of Victorian religion*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 56.

18 Stephen J. Fleming, "The Religious Heritage of the British Northwest and the Rise of Mormonism" *Church History*, 77, no. 1 (2008), 73-104.

19 Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 164.

may look to the modern eye.²⁰ In the same way, Mormonism in Britain was not so radical in a religious environment that was beginning to tolerate Catholicism; embracing dissenter practices and re-evaluating Biblical interpretations.²¹ Mormonism still conflicted with other dissenter denominations, but actively tried to avoid the vicious, violent, and legal backlashes that the faith experienced in America. Considering roughly one quarter of British converts came from Methodism, it seems that that Mormonism was acquiring those who were disillusioned with the dissenter church.²²

Most of the Quorum still managed to set out for Britain in 1839 under the leadership of Brigham Young. A mission dominated by experienced American missionaries, it is unsurprising to find that American conversion strategies were exported to Britain. Mormon missionaries across the Atlantic employed many similar strategies. For one, they travelled to and around Britain ‘Without Purse or Scrip’; relying on donations and hospitality from locals, while preaching in churches, temperance societies, fields and barns.²³ Mormons in America also found little need for complex advertisements, and indeed it seems that the Quorum in Britain would try to preach at other events or just hire a hall, announce their intentions to preach and rely on word of mouth.²⁴ When they did preach, they preached a millennial message of the coming end times: nothing too far from the ‘dispensation’ messages found in

20 Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963), 55-56; Peter M. Chidester “Land Choice above All Others: The Importance of the American Wilderness to the Rise of the Mormon Church 1820-1850” (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 2012).

21 B.G. Worrall, *The Making of the Modern Church: Christianity in England Since 1800*, 3rd edited by (London: BG Worrall Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 84-89; Gibson, *Church, State and Society*, 85.

22 Fleming, “The Religious Heritage of the British Northwest”, 77.

23 Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 91, 141.

24 Ibid., 240-241.

America.²⁵ Finally, the American Mormons brought a little of their aggressive debating practices to Britain. John Taylor was converted alongside Joseph Fielding in Toronto. Though also British born, he used the aggressive preaching style Mormons were using in North America: engaging in vicious pamphlet debates with opponents.²⁶ Meanwhile, American missionaries in London, finding themselves quietly snubbed, wished for an excuse to draw their opponents out into “open combat”.²⁷ Leading a mission that converted over 5000 people, the Quorum’s success was immense, but they knew their time overseeing the mission themselves was limited. Promoting local converts was required in order to administrate the mission, forming a structure that did not just extend the life of the British mission, but fundamentally changed the strategic framework of the missionaries.

The Quorum did not open any new areas for preaching in the last six months of their mission. Instead, branches were consolidated into conferences, and conferences grouped into districts. Local British converts were promoted into positions of authority, and granted authority to promote people to the priesthood. Some scholars have praised the promotion of local converts, and the end of the Quorum’s mission should have signalled a transfer from American rule to British.²⁸ However, the highest positions continued to be dominated by American missionaries, with Lorenzo Snow taking over the London Mission in 1841.²⁹ It was only in 1887 with George Teasdale that the role of British mission president was occupied by

²⁵ Ibid., 86-87.

²⁶ David J. Whittaker, “John Taylor and Mormon Imprints in Europe, 1840–52,” in *Champion of Liberty: John Taylor*, edited by Mary Jane Woodger, (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009), 111-142.

²⁷ Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 212.

²⁸ Jan G. Harris, “Mormons in Victorian Manchester” *BYU Studies*, 27, no. 1 (1987), 53.

²⁹ Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 29.

someone British born and converted. Nonetheless, British diaries show the British mission developing new versions of American strategies.

Stage 1: Opening New Regions

British missionaries such as Theodore Turley continued the ‘Without Purse or Scrip’ doctrine, but also had to overcome the legal hurdles that Britain demanded of dissenter preachers. Turley was one of the British emigrants to Canada that Parley Parker Pratt baptised in 1837, and one of the only ones to keep a mission diary.³⁰ Aged 38 in 1839, Turley joined the British mission with John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, who would each serve as the Church’s third and fourth presidents respectively. It was the first time Turley had set foot back in Britain in 13 years.³¹

Turley’s first port of call was back home in Birmingham. He reached out to old family and friends, and even sought out local Methodist preachers he used to know.³² An experienced ex-Methodist preacher himself, Turley was surprised to find that his arguments and pleas were largely wasted. While Methodist members were soft targets for Mormonism, diaries show that its ministers were amongst the most vehement opponents of the new Church.³³ Finding no success, Turley resolved to go travelling, embracing the American Mormon way of preaching wherever he could. His diary bursts with such accounts: when he was arrested

30 Jeffrey S. Hardy “Overview of Theodore Turley's Diary” TomPerry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University URL: <https://lib.byu.edu/collections/mormon-missionarydiaries/about/diarists/theodore-turley/> (last accessed December 2016).

31 Ibid.

32 Theodore Turley, “February 02, 1840” Theodore Turley vol. 1, 1839-1840, 1840, Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

33 Theodore Turley, “April 26, 1840” Theodore Turley vol. 1, 1839-1840, 1840 L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

for preaching without a license, Turley preached to his fellow inmates.³⁴ In fact, he was so consumed with regaling his efforts to preach to fellow inmates that he never actually recorded the reason for his arrest in his diary. Turley's efforts were valiant, but also exemplified the limitations of a direct transplant of American techniques to Britain. Mormons needed to acquire licenses to preach and meet, which dampened the spontaneity of their travelling. Furthermore, British Mormons remained isolated for much longer than their American counterparts. American converts were expected to move to Zion within the foreseeable future whether it be in Missouri, Ohio, or Utah. Though it was still a difficult and even dangerous task for Mormons to drop their lives and gather, U.S. saints such as Jonathan and Caroline Crosby could still do so without advanced planning from the Church.³⁵ On the other hand, British converts were not expected to move within months or even years after their conversion, and when they were, it was only done so after intense long-term planning and fundraising.

British missionaries needed to 'open' locations more permanently if they hoped to expand or maintain their preaching options. Their diaries constantly refer to 'opening', or the need to open new houses or towns. An 'opened' house simply meant that the residents were interested in the faith. Ajax William for example, wrote that he was, "Distributing tracts in Kirby St. and Alfred St. Two houses declined taking them anymore, but I succeeded in opening 7 [or] 8 fresh houses instead."³⁶ It was more common though, to 'open' a town by acquiring a room to preach. John Lyon, wrote that he hoped local Mormons could "aid us in

34 Ibid.

35 Caroline Crosby, "Memoirs, 1807 to September 1846" *No Place to Call Home: The 1807-1857 Life Writings of Caroline Barnes Crosby, Chronicler of Outlying Mormon Communities*, edited by Edward Leo Lyman, Susan Ward Payne and S. George Ellsworth (Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005), 34-39.

36 Ajax Williams "December 22, 1861" Ajax Williams vol.1, 1861, Turley L. TomPerry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

opening Pershore as a preaching Station.”³⁷ Daniel Williams noted that the Mormons travelled, “sometimes together, and sometimes, each by himself, as places would open for preaching in the week nights.”³⁸ This was clearly official policy, with James Farmer later appointing, “12 officers to go out and open new ground 2 together gave each 2-3 [villages].”³⁹ Decades after the first Mormons landed in Britain, Mormons were still explicitly finding ways to ‘open’ halls to preach. According to Moses Thatcher, James Stuart in the Barrow branch wrote that he, “hopes to do some good in extending the Knowledge of the Gospel in that place, but that it was very difficult to procure a place in which to preach.”⁴⁰ Daniel MacFarlane, working to extend Mormonism’s reach, found that, “there was no opening in Peterhead, unless I had means to hire a hall and bill the Town.”⁴¹ Mormons still preached wherever they could, but were limited in what that constituted. Instead, Mormons needed to go out with a clear plan.

Stage 2: New Ways to Gather Audiences

But where missionaries could not preach, their publications could still be read. The British mission began publishing quickly, setting up a publishing committee and plans for the monthly periodical *The Millennial Star* by 1840. A year later, 2500 copies were already

37 John Lyon “February 15, 1849” John Lyon vol.1, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

38 Daniel Williams “undated journal entry” 1852, Williams, Daniel vol. 1, 1847-1852, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

39 Ibid.

40 Moses Thatcher “October 30, 1867” Thatcher, Moses vol.02 1867-1868, 1867 L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

41 Daniel Sinclair Macfarlane, “October 15, 1877” Macfarlane, Daniel Sinclair, 1877 L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

printed, along with 50,000 pamphlets/tracts and 4050 copies of the Book of Mormon.⁴² At the time, the Mormons had already baptised between five or six thousand people, leading to a healthier supply of Books of Mormon compared to early America. Mormon scholar Clyde J. Williams made no attempt to conclude how many people used the Book of Mormon when converting or proselytising, but nonetheless concluded that it was a significant tool for those that did.⁴³ As covered in my previous chapter, this argument was also applied to the American context by Church historians Bennett and Livingstone.⁴⁴ Williams conceded that missionaries did not record much use of the Book of Mormon, and admits that it took seven years for the Mormons to sell just 4050 copies.⁴⁵ Williams at least provides direct testimonies from British converts that they converted after reading the Book of Mormon, an achievement that has proven difficult in America.

But testimonies of missionaries, including those of Daniel Williams, confirm that pamphlets were indeed the primary publication tool. Pamphlets were the first contact in regions where physical missionaries did not yet exist. Welshman Daniel Williams wrote in his journal that he had been so disturbed by sectarianism in the region that by 1834, he was participating in private Bible study groups.⁴⁶ Still, he still found himself spiritually wanting. Though Clyde.

42 David J. Whittaker, James R. Moss, “Missions of the Twelve to the British Isles” in *Encyclopaedia of Mormonism*, edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York : Macmillan, 1992), 920-921.

43 Clyde J. Williams, “‘More Value . . . Than All the Gold and Silver of England’: The Book of Mormon in Britain, 1837–52,” *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: The British Isles*, edited by Cynthia Doxey, Robert C. Freeman, Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, and Dennis A. Wright, (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2007), 79-107.

44 John P. Livingstone and Richard E. Bennet, “Remember the New Covenant, Even the Book of Mormon (D&C 84:57)” in *Go Ye into All The World: The Growth & Development of Mormon Missionary Work*, edited by Reid L. Nielson and Fred E. Woods, (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University press, Deseret Book Company, 2012).

45 Williams, “More Value . . . Than All the Gold and Silver of England”, 79–107.

46 Ibid; Daniel Williams “undated journal entry”, 1852.

J. Williams cites references to ‘testimony’ and ‘scripture’ to emphasise the power of the Book of Mormon, Daniel’s own narrative clearly emphasises the importance of a pamphlet. Sometime in the early 1840s, Daniel received a copy of the Mormon pamphlet ‘Remarkable Visions’ from his brother.⁴⁷ These pamphlets were useful advertisements, as the small religion only entered Wales in 1840, and even then only made serious headway in 1845 under the auspices of Missionary Dan Jones.⁴⁸ Though Daniel incorrectly cited the pamphlet’s author as Orson Pratt instead of Parley Parker Pratt, unlike the “Book of Mormon” Daniel at least named ‘Remarkable Visions’ by name. It was years before an opportunity to listen to actual missionaries presented itself, and even then the rumours spreading about this dangerous church scared him away multiple times. When he finally heard the preachers he, “found that their doctrines were perfectly scriptural and their testimony I could not reject.” In March 1847 Daniel was finally baptised.⁴⁹

Pamphlets were clearly prioritised by missionaries when compared to the Book of Mormon. Even after converting and resolving to proselytise, Daniel still never mentioned the Book of Mormon in his journal. When Dan Jones directed Daniel to preach in Swansea, he spent his time travelling, “through the whole town and neighbourhood to circulate tracts, and open places for preaching the gospel.”⁵⁰ In fact, Daniel sold tracts wherever he went, all while encouraging the local Mormon branches to organise local tract distribution of their own. Even

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

women partook in pamphleteering, with Daniel writing that he sent, “my wife and sister S Jones round Pater with tracts and to invite people to meeting in the evening.”⁵¹

While travelling and preaching, Mormon missionaries either distributed tracts or encouraged others to do so. The Scottish Mormon poet John Lyons not only spread pamphlets, but gave many to local communities to distribute themselves. He even encouraged communities to raise the funds needed to sustain long term-tract distribution.⁵² Other diaries confirm that local Mormon communities were taking on the requests of these preachers. Fourteen year old Samuel Stephan Jones converted in 1851, and almost immediately began distributing tracts. He was expected to assist the Church in various matters after being granted the position of Deacon in 1852, and further expected to visit and instruct fellow saints after assuming the role of Teacher in 1853.⁵³ It was not until 1854, aged 17, that Jones was called to the priesthood and expected to preach.⁵⁴ Though Deacons and Teachers focused more on internal community work, Jones specifically notes that he was regularly distributing tracts throughout this entire period.⁵⁵ Even as a priest, however, Jones never mentioned working with the Book of Mormon.

David J. Whittaker identified eleven different kinds of Mormon publication, but the most common ones were doctrinal treatises and millennial proclamations and warnings. ‘A Voice of Warning’ by Parley Parker Pratt clearly falls under both, with its full title: ‘A Voice of *Warning* and Instruction to All People, or, An Introduction to the Faith and *Doctrine* of the

51 Daniel Williams “June 01, 1852”.

52 John Lyons “February 11, February 16, March 18”, 1849.

53 Samuel Stephan Jones, “Undated Entry” Jones, Samuel Stephen vol. 1, 1855, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

54 Ibid.

55 Samuel Stephan Jones, “Undated entries, June 17 1855, April 16, 1856”.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints'.⁵⁶ Copied and translated multiple times, the work is an excellent summary of the kinds of arguments found in many Mormon pamphlets. Furthermore these pamphlets codified common arguments used by missionaries when preaching, or in the public debates in which American Mormons engaged.⁵⁷ However, British Mormons did not debate the way Americans did, with pamphlets representing an alternative way for Mormons to criticise other churches and illustrate their own theology via a far less confrontational method.

'A Voice of Warning' exemplifies the arguments that missionaries and their pamphlets presented throughout the nineteenth century. It argued that religious truth can only come via perfect analysis of the Bible, with its opening claim that, "In order to prove anything from Scripture, it is highly necessary in the first place to lay down some certain, definite, infallible rule of interpretation."⁵⁸ Pratt goes on to argue that since other Churches came to different conclusions, their methods of interpretation must be fallible. Pratt concludes that the only infallible method of interpretation was to assume that all prophecies in the Bible had to be literally fulfilled, and that any prophecy that had not been literally fulfilled must therefore be fulfilled in the future.

In America, missionaries used these pamphlets as inspiration for their preaching and debates. Historian David J. Whittaker argued that these pamphlets helped standardise Mormon arguments.⁵⁹ When we view excerpts from John D. Lee and Alfonso Young's 1842 debate

⁵⁶ My emphasis.

⁵⁷ David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1982), 14.

⁵⁸ Parley Parker Pratt, *'A voice of warning and instruction to all people'. Or, 'An introduction to the faith and doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints'*, 11 edited by (Salt Lake City: Deseret News company, Printers and publishers, 1881) first published 1846.

⁵⁹ Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering", 14.

against the Cambellites, it is clear that American Mormons drew their arguments directly from sections of 'A Voice of Warning'. Both lamented the 'blindness' or 'confusion' causing wild theological differences between contemporary Churches (1) and both concluded that this was due to these churches rejecting the 'primitive' Church and the influences of the 'spirit' (2). Parley Parker Pratt for example, wrote that:

(1) The wise and learned have differed, and do still widely differ, from each other, in the understanding of prophecy... There are two great causes for this blindness...
 (2) First, mankind have supposed that direct inspiration by the Holy Ghost was not intended for all ages of the Church, but was confined to *primitive* times....Secondly, having *lost the Spirit of Inspiration*, they began to institute their own opinions, traditions, and commandments; giving constructions and private interpretations to the written word.⁶⁰

The Second Great Awakening inspired revival in Britain, but debating was one American practice that never transferred. Furthermore, local Church goers would have likely found the practice offensive even if it had appeared. Most British 'dissenter' churches had equivalences in America, even if they did not always see eye to eye. British Methodism for example, effectively banned American meetings and implemented stringent vetting processes on American preachers.⁶¹ Regardless, Methodists, along with Baptists, Presbyterians, Unitarians and Quakers clearly engaged with their brethren across the sea. On the other hand, Cambellites had no official presence in Britain until 1842. Therefore, the debating style they had instigated in America which had inspired American Mormons, never really inspired an equivalent Church across the Atlantic.⁶² However, it would have been unlikely that the

⁶⁰ Pratt, A voice of warning.

⁶¹ Jennifer Lloyd, *Women and the Shaping of British Methodism: Persistent Preachers, 1807-1907* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 70.

⁶² Louis Billington "The Churches of Christ in Britain: A study in 19th Century Sectarianism" *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An International Religious Tradition*, edited by Michael W. Casey and Douglas A. Foster (University of Tennessee press: Knoxville, 2002), 368.

practice would have caught on even with an earlier Cambellite presence. Richard Carwadine noted that British revivalist preachers were softer spoken and less inclined to whip up emotional zeal than their American counterparts.⁶³ Furthermore, it was common practice for dissenters to also attend established churches. Therefore, an aggressive format intended to declare winners and losers may not have been particularly attractive. Dissenter churches, Methodists included, purposefully did not hold services that would clash with the established Church.⁶⁴ Missionaries even preached inside other churches, with Theodore Turley preaching in a Baptist Church.⁶⁵ This did not mean that British competitors found Mormonism any less distasteful or offensive on the whole, but Mormon missionaries both American and British born quickly decided that aggressive practices would have unnecessarily antagonised their opponents without generating real interest in the faith.

Even when churches fought for exclusive membership or began conflicts with Mormons, hostilities were indirect. Both the Church of England and dissenter groups began organising conflicting meetings and services to force their flocks to choose.⁶⁶ Mormons certainly experienced the same tactics, as when Daniel Williams preached in the Welsh town of Angle. He wrote that, “They had got two Wesleyans to preach at the same time with in forty or fifty yards to the place where I was standing”.⁶⁷ An American preacher would have likely challenged these Wesleyans to debate, but Daniel instead focused his efforts in other towns. Furthermore, their competitors were writing tracts and pamphlets. Theodore Turley reports

63 Richard Carwadine, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism*, 149.

64 Gibson, *Church, State and Society*, 83-84.

65 Theodore Turley, 'June 16, June 17, 1840'.

66 Gibson, *Church, State and Society*, 83-84.

67 Daniel Williams “May 23, 1850”.

doing damage-control on anti-Mormon pamphlets in as early as 1840.⁶⁸ The closest thing to a debate Daniel Williams engaged in, was to borrow, read from, and respond to an anti-Mormon pamphlet that his audience was reading.

One major technique for attracting audiences in Britain was to visit homes. Personal visits existed in both America and Britain, however, legal and economic restrictions in Britain led visits to occur before preaching instead of afterwards. In both regions, Mormons constantly visited private homes of Mormons and non-Mormons alike. Visiting non-Mormons was a part of travelling from town to town. Personal visits occasionally resulted naturally out of staying at someone's home. In America, visiting private homes went hand in hand with preaching: Mormons would preach, then receive invitations to visit interested listeners and further answer their questions. Guests were also invited to the meetings with the intention that they would blossom into full preaching sessions. We occasionally see similar practices in Britain, with Theodore Turley noting after a preaching session that, "a number followed me to my lodgings too [sic] inquire after the truth."⁶⁹

Legal, cultural and economic restrictions in Britain made it difficult to hold full meetings in homes. Some dissenting churches, or non-Anglican churches, gained worship rights in the 1689 Toleration Act, with Catholics and Unitarians also included in 1791 and 1813 respectively. However, dissenting churches were still technically barred from holding services in private homes.⁷⁰ In reality, the first American missionaries certainly preached in

⁶⁸ Theodore Turley "January 28, 1840".

⁶⁹ Theodore Turley "May 25, 1840".

⁷⁰ "William and Mary, 1688: An Act for Exempting their Majestyes Protestant Subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the Penalties of certaine Lawes." [Chapter XVIII. Rot. Parl. pt. 5. nu. 15.], in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 6, 1685-94*, edited by John Raithby (1819), 74-76, British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol6/pp74-76> (accessed 20 June 2017).

private residences while travelling. British missionaries also preached in homes, though the language of diaries leaves us unsure about when exactly they did so. For example, when James Farmer, “got a house open and gave notice I would preach there on the following Sunday”, it is not clear whether he is talking about a private, or meeting house.⁷¹

Missionaries could skirt the law if they did not hold a meeting in a home and instead just had a personal discussion about Mormonism without any extra guests, though they likely broke the law on occasion as well. However, economic conditions ensured that any home meetings were the exception, rather than the rule. The majority of British Mormons came from working class backgrounds whose living conditions were inappropriate for meetings.⁷² It is important to clarify that just as in America, British Mormons were not poorer than the general population, nor is there any evidence that socio-economic factors influenced any attraction to Mormonism, yet these factors heavily influenced the way Mormons could preach.⁷³ Multiple missionaries noted the crowded living conditions of their flocks, with multiple families living under the same roof out of necessity.⁷⁴ Unlike in America, many missionaries had to stay in boarding houses when travelling, even when they visited a town with multiple converts.⁷⁵ Missionaries would have loved to preach at these places as well, but they were often too

71 James Farmer “January 25, 1852” Farmer, James vol. 1, 1851-1853, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

72 Harris, “Mormons in Victorian Manchester”, 47.

73 Taylor “Expectations Westward”, 35.

74 James Farmer “January 22, 1840”; Charles Harper “April 03, 1854” Harper, Charles Alfred vol. 1, 1852, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

75 James Farmer “October 06, 1852”.

crowded.⁷⁶ Certainly, the working class Mormons of Manchester or Welsh mining towns could not host more than one or two missionaries carrying pamphlets.

Stages 3 and 4: Meetings

Rather than blooming into preaching sessions, Mormons pushed their hosts to study and attend meetings in hired halls or rooms. Particularly popular amongst Quakers, meeting houses were a staple of various 18th and 19th century dissenter churches in both North America and Britain.⁷⁷ British dissenters required permission to hold services and had to do so in licensed meeting houses.⁷⁸ There were over a thousand Catholic and dissenter meeting houses by the time Mormonism hit British shores.⁷⁹ By 1851, new dissenter churches of various kinds were registered in over ninety-nine percent of the 624 British registration districts.⁸⁰

Though Mormon diaries do not always explicitly explain what it meant to ‘open’ a region, it included the registration of meeting houses. James Farmer made passing reference to getting “a license for the Shearsby meeting room”, but the 1851 Census of religion that same year revealed that the Latter Day Saints were now registered in 129 registration districts: over twenty percent.⁸¹ This surprisingly far reach helps put the value of Mormon travelling methods into perspective, with K.D.M. Snell and Paul S. Ell observing that its reach was on

76 James Farmer “October 11, 1852”; Daniel Williams “Undated Entry” 1852.

77 J. Landes, *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World: The Creation of an Early Modern Community*, (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2015).

78 Lloyd, *Women and the Shaping of British Methodism*, 16.

79 *Justice of the Peace and County, Borough, Poor Law Union and Parish Law Recorder vol.1*, edited by William Eagal J.L. Jellicoe (London: Henry Shaw, 1837), 311-312.

80 Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 166.

81 *Ibid.*, 163-164.

par with that of mid-tier Methodist sects.⁸² But these meeting houses were not just a legal requirement for Mormonism to function in Britain. Diaries clearly show that Mormon strategies, from preaching to healing, primarily took place within their meeting houses. James Farmer's diary alone makes over 250 references to meetings in less than three years.⁸³ It is evident that these houses became small outposts to maintain Mormon presence across Britain.

Mormons continued to preach on the street, but ultimately, most preaching occurred within meetings. By the 1850s, most diarists were mentioning taking Sacrament each Sunday. Though there was no specific requirement to partake in Sacrament each week, gathering in meeting rooms each Sunday to eat bread and drink water (instead of wine) did seem to occur with increased regularity. Leaders would then promote members, lead prayer or hymns, discipline, teach, heal, advise and preach. Samuel Stephan Jones was ordained a Deacon at a Sunday meeting, while James Farmer records ordaining Deacons, Teachers and Priests.⁸⁴ When visiting branches, preachers encouraged local proselytising, with James Farmer gathering the Shearsby branch in Leicestershire to show them, the necessity of Purchasing some tracts."⁸⁵

With a reliable Mormon crowd, meetings were natural preaching opportunities. Diaries show that these meetings did not just cater to the current members. Meetings were geared towards Mormons, but diarists often noted the 'strangers' present at these meetings. As Abram Hatch wrote, at the "Meeting room at Pendlebury...we had a good congregation, Several Strangers

82 Ibid.

83 See James Farmer, *Farmer, James* vol. 1, 1851-1853, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

84 Samuel Stephan Jones, "Undated Entry"; James Farmer "June 15, 1851, June 22, 1851, December 17, 1851, December 24, 1851" to name a few.

85 James Farmer, "January 04, 1851".

Present...I Spoke for about the Same length of time, upon the Gospel & the authority to Preach".⁸⁶ John Lyon regularly recalled a "few strangers" at each meeting. With both converts and interested strangers present, meetings proved an excellent opportunity to preach.

Samuel Stephan Jones reports crowds as large as 200 when preaching outdoors in a Liverpool Park, but the crowds at meetings came in much smaller sizes.⁸⁷ Stockport's Mormon membership was around 60.⁸⁸ When Abram Hatch preached there he found a "Good Congregation Some 50 or 60".⁸⁹ When he preached at the Mosely Common Branch that numbered twelve members, he found at the meeting "some 10 or 12 Saints & 2 Strangers present". It is difficult to tell how many strangers were usually present at meetings: some mention numbers around 10-15, but most write of a vague presence of 'few' or 'many' strangers. Though Mormon meetings were protected, they also stunted Mormon growth. Even in the most successful counties, Mormons still commanded less than 1% of Church attendance.⁹⁰ Because meetings required audiences to come to them instead of the other way around, the new strategy limited their ability to sweep whole towns.

But preaching sessions were not reserved for Sunday. Though sacrament was generally on Sunday, Mormons held meetings on any day of the week. So too, Missionaries preached any day of the week. In fact Mormons seemed to preach within meetings far more so than any street preaching. Just as in America, their diaries leave us with just a preaching topic at best but far more often just simple statements that they preached. Like in America, British

86 AbramHatch, "June 29, 1865" Hatch, Abram vol.05, 1865, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

87 AbramHatch "April 30, 1865".

88 AbramHatch "April 09, 1865".

89 Ibid.

90 Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 164.

missionaries often preached on the 'First Principles'. The basic, relatively uncontroversial topics remained a stalwart in both regions. Other topics lacked serious controversy. Preachers such as John Lyon preached on equally uncontroversial topics "on the difference of the Law of Moses and the Law of faith".⁹¹ Missionaries also often recorded that they expounded of various Bible passages. Preaching from the Bible was not out of the ordinary in either Britain or America. In fact, for some dissenter groups it was central.⁹² However, it is again worth noting British Mormons still opted to preach from the Bible over the Book of Mormon, even when most or even all of the audience were members of the Church.

The British meeting system promoted topics more controversial than generally seen in America, likely because such large percentages of the audiences were Mormon. In America, Mormons usually skirted around Joseph Smith, but British Mormons did occasionally mention preaching on him being a prophet. James Farmer even preached on "The restoration of the H[o]use of Israel", which involved the spiritual as well as physical rebuilding of the ancient church.⁹³ William Clayton preached on "the propriety and absolute necessity" of "baptism for the dead", or in other words, baptising convert family members who had already died.⁹⁴ British missionaries at meetings always felt like they were preaching on home ground, meaning that they preached on a wider range of topics, and exposed non-Mormons to the same. However, Polygamy remained largely off the record.

Polygamy, or plural marriage, was only publicly announced in 1852. A closer analysis of the plural marriage doctrine's impact on missionary work is discussed in the next chapter, but it

91 John Lyon "March 18, 1849".

92 Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 35.

93 James Farmer "September 09, 1851".

94 William Clayton "April 08, 1841".

is worth noting now the almost complete absence of any mention of it from British preaching records. This silence implies that missionaries thought the doctrine would scare away potential converts. Usually plural marriage was brought up by hecklers, and even then preachers tried avoiding the debate rather than defending the doctrine. James Farmer was one of the only Mormons to mention plural marriage as a preaching topic, recording in 1853 that Levi Richards “made some good remarks on the subject of Polygamy [sic] sharing the wisdom of the celestial Order and the evils of the present state of society”.⁹⁵ Farmer also recorded that after Richards, “Elder Orson Spencer [preached] on the same subject [Polygamy]”.⁹⁶ His extra comment that Orson preached “in his usual plain and simple manner so that no one could gainsay his words”, gives away the concerns he and others held, about how the doctrine would be perceived by non-Mormons.⁹⁷

The meeting hall fundamentally changed British strategies away from the America debates: proper meeting rooms granted the missionaries legal protection. Not all ‘strangers’ were sympathetic to the Mormon messages. Hecklers, many of whom were active members or even ministers of another church, often challenged British Mormons. Methodist ministers were particularly common critics, likely trying to defend their flocks from a faith gathering many ex-Methodists. In Market Harborough, Leicester, James Farmer recorded in his diary that when a minister “tried to disturb us... I told him I would not be disturbed but would answer any questions when I had done.”⁹⁸ In America, such an interaction would have likely pulled the missionary into an impromptu debate. But in Britain one could not allow a debate

⁹⁵ James Farmer “January 09, 1853”.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ James Farmer “August 21, 1852”.

and then call upon the police if it did not go in their favour. Instead, missionaries in Britain attempted to privately discuss concerns afterwards: using the space to mimic the post-sermon personal visit that would have been held in private homes in America. In America, visiting homes was part of a distinct strategic stage that was separate from preaching. As follow up questions were now just as public as the preaching and were done in the meeting halls, the two stages are far more difficult to distinguish.

In many instances, Mormons in Britain stopped engaging with critics outside of their own meeting hall. Street preaching started to fall away as a result. Daniel Williams exemplified this trend best, with one entry noting that while street preaching, he refused to answer a Roman Catholic's questions, "unless he would come to my licenced Room - for I saw that he had companions with him who were for a row."⁹⁹ Meeting house preaching was interrupted as well, but much less so when compared to open air preaching. Daniel Williams, while overseeing communities in West Wales, recorded that their meetings were often interrupted by kids from the nearby Sunday School: "besieged by hundreds of little urchins, half grown who would station themselves about the door to prevent everybody from entering by brawling out "Mormon" "Joe Smit" "Deceiver" "False prophets"- Whoping till no one could hear his own voice".¹⁰⁰ However, as their house was not licensed, Daniel could not implore the police to clear their meeting. Daniel recorded multiple instances of mobs interrupting licensed meeting halls as well, but hecklers could at least be threatened with tangible consequences. After another heckler interrupted a meeting, Daniel recorded that: "The president told him we would talk about that at the proper time, we had now met to worship

99 Daniel Williams "July 04, 1852".

100 Daniel Williams "November 23, 1851".

God in our *licensed* house and would not be disturbed so he was quiet.”¹⁰¹ James Farmer reported similar protection, writing that, “In the evening I opened the meeting when to our surprize [sic] a number of men came up and swore we should not preach and stopped our meeting till a constable came and after much trouble peace was restored”.¹⁰² Mormonism’s legal protection in Britain is quite fascinating. Many historians, and even the LDS Church itself, have also attributed the rise of Mormonism to the United States’ religious “Freedom, unrestricted, and unabated”.¹⁰³ Even critics of Mormonism in both America and Britain at the time, blamed its rise on rampant religious freedom. Yet, the land of religious freedom chased the faith out of two states and killed its prophet. British licensing requirements alone made the region more religiously restrictive, but in an ironic twist, provided Mormonism with a strategic option that granted more protection than what they could have received in America. Entertaining debates undermined the preachers from calling on the police, and the hall they were preaching in served as the perfect location to mimic the post-sermon personal visit that in America, was held in private homes.

American born missionaries found the British strategy so successful that they also began avoiding debates. Though historians have found instances of American raised missionaries baiting or desiring debates in Britain, diaries show that they eventually adopted the locally appropriate British strategies. When a priest interrupted a Mormon meeting for example, American Abraham Hatch, “bade him to hush” rather than engage with him.¹⁰⁴ American

101 Daniel Williams “September 05, 1852”.

102 James Farmer “October 20, 1851”.

103 Trevor Alvord, “Certainty to Distrust: Conversion in Early Mormonism” *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, 30 (2010), 142.

104 Abram Hatch “April 30, 1865” Hatch, Abram vol. 04, 1865, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

missionaries such as Thatcher adopted British strategies to the point that they chastised British Mormons who engaged in debates. After a heckler interrupted Moses Thatcher he wrote that he, “was sorry to see the brethren (the local brethren I mean) soon fall into their spirit and manifested a disposition to quarrel and contend- and it was some time before I could get them the brethren, to hold their peace: it did seem that they were harder to Controll than were the people.”¹⁰⁵ Such examples of American missionaries taking on British strategies challenges our assumptions about Mormonism’s inherent Americanness.

It was good motivation for American missionaries to avoid debates. Debates brought American Mormons success, but sustained attacks on American Mormons including the brutal mobbing of Joseph Smith likely dampened the American Mormon appetite for conflict. Mormons in America had already taken to calling their critics “mobocrats”.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, it seems that American missionaries valued legal protection of their meetings over engaging in impromptu debates. The American Oliver Boardman Huntington recorded an interesting interaction between Orson Hyde (also American) and some hecklers:

He [Orson Hyde] spoke very lengthy and brought forward a great deal of new doctrine...and it made them Squirm mightily, for as soon as he stoped speaking, a man commenced to oppose him and gave him a challenge for a publick discussion, but brother Hyde requested him to set down and not disturb our meeting for he wished to dismiss quietly... Brother Hyde cried out that he did not wish to be disturbed and then came a Police man and made him [the heckler] hold his peace.¹⁰⁷

105 Moses Thatcher “August 05, 1867”.

106 Robert Lang Campbell “September 23, 1846” Campbell, Robert Lang vol. 1, 1843-1845, 1848, 1850, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

107 Oliver Boardman Huntington “October 25, 1846” Huntington, Oliver Boardman book 4, 1846, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

It is especially surprising to see Orson Hyde resist a direct challenge for “publick discussion”. One might understand if he wanted to avoid direct debates after he himself publically announced Mormonism’s plural marriage doctrine in 1852, however he was already avoiding debates in 1847.¹⁰⁸ Orson even wrote in his autobiography that when he converted he had first listened to arguments from Mormons and non-Mormons alike and that, “after about three months of careful and prayerful investigation, reflection and meditation, I came to the conclusion that the ‘Mormons’ had more light and a better spirit than their opponents.”¹⁰⁹ Hyde must have struggled to resist the challenge to defend his doctrine, especially when those strategies had converted a generation of American Mormons, including himself. But the entire incident shows not only how much Mormon missionary strategies changed in Britain, but that the American born missionaries were adapting as well.

Stage Five: The Expansion of Healings

In America, curious potential converts first heard rumours of a Golden Bible. They sought out missionaries and listened to them preach, then met with them privately to learn more. Though scholars such as James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker are reluctant to recognise it, potential converts who still resisted conversion were regularly offered the benefits of Mormonism’s gifts of the Gospel, if they then agreed to convert. These authors of the respected ‘Men with a Mission 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles’ affirmed that while Mormons in Britain healed through faith, “There is no evidence...that they encouraged the missionaries to pray for it or use it as a

108 Orson Hyde, “Orson Hyde, 1805-1878” 1864, Book of Abraham Project, URL: <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/OHyde.html> (last accessed January 2017).

109 Ibid.

conversion tool. It was a sign that followed belief, not an evidence for unbelievers.”¹¹⁰ My own study of Mormon diaries shows that missionaries did indeed offer healings if people pledged to convert. Not only did faith healing continue to garner conversions in Britain, but when left in British hands, actually grew in prominence.

British Mormons incorporated faith healing into their conversion narratives just as often as Americans did. Daniel Williams own conversion narrative carried common notes. First, he had been ill for an extended period leading up to his baptism writing that, “I was invalided when I was baptised and had been under the care of two doctors for five months previous to my baptism.”¹¹¹ He noted that doctors had failed him during that time: “My disease was Ulcerations of the Intestines, which had brought me nearly to the gates of Death -- After my Baptism the Doctors gave me up for dead declaring that they could do nothing more for me”.¹¹² But finally he was then healed by an elder, who, “anointed me with oil in the name of the Lord and laid his hands on me and prayed the Lord to heal me I felt the healing power of God pass through my whole frame in an instant like electricity driving before it every pain and disease which I had been suffering for so long.”¹¹³ In other words, Williams claims that finding Mormonism literally saved his life.

Other diaries show that missionaries in Britain were still offering the faith healers’ pledge to non-Mormons. American born missionaries were still cautious of its use, but continued healing non-Mormons in Britain. During Oliver Boardman Huntington’s British mission from 1846-1847, a British Mormon, Brother Dudley, wondered if he could administer to his non-

110 Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 92-93.

111 Daniel Williams, “undated entry”

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

Mormon mother. Huntington wrote in his diary that Dudley, “wanted council of me to know it would be wisdom to lay hands on her, as he expected that was what she wanted, for she had requested it before, and yet she had not been bap**t**ised [sic]. I told him to do it, *if she would covenant to obey the Gospel if she was restored.*”¹¹⁴ Apparently the woman was not baptised, though whether it was for practical time related constraints, because she refused baptism, or was actually secretly administered by her son, Oliver did not know. Either way, American Mormons, often in more senior positions than their British counterparts, were faced with tough spontaneous challenges over the extent they could permit usage of the gifts of the Gospel.

British born missionaries healed with far less reservations than the Americans. I have previously noted that we have few direct references to the faith healers’ pledge in America, but British Mormons liberally healed non-Mormons and were explicit about its role in conversion. By the 1850s, British born missionaries such as Daniel Williams and James Farmer openly acknowledged the relationship between healing and converting. Daniel Williams notes healing a woman named Lydia Rees who was, “at the time, very ill, and had been so for a long time previous reduced to a mere skel**e**ton with weakness - was compelled to be supported by her husband in walking”.¹¹⁵ When he healed her, “She received health *immediately arose and prepared for Baptism* rejoicing in the goodness of God toward her.”¹¹⁶

114 Oliver Boardman Huntington “October 09, 1846” Huntington, Oliver Boardman Book 3, 1846, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; my emphasis.

115 Daniel Williams “August 19, 1850”.

116 Ibid.

James Farmer's account about the healing of a child from a non-Mormon family carries the hallmarks of a Mormon healing narrative. Farmer notes how the doctors had given up on the child, as well as a precise timeframe for the speed with which he recovered after the healing:

A man who was in the meeting had a child that wasted to a skeleton through a disease in the bowels its bones nearly skin I never saw a greater pity having been invited to see him I asked him if he believed that this was the work of God. He said he did I also asked if the doctors had attended it he said they had and had given him up to die he was 8 years old his mother weeping and mourning I told them that as they believed and as I was a servant of God that by a to the ordinance of the Church the child should get better I anointed his bowels with out and gave him some internally and laid my hands on his head and from that hour the child began to amend and in 14 days was able to run about The parents were not in the church all the people testify that is was a great mercy the doctor declared he never saw a case like it to recover.¹¹⁷

Though this account does not include an explicit deal, subsequent entries show that Farmer most definitely expected the family to convert. Farmer later visited the family, claiming they still owed him their conversions: "I warned them that if they did not obey the Gospel after seeing the power of God made manifest as they had that the Judgments of God would rest upon them... decided to let her [the wife's] baptism stand over for a week."¹¹⁸ Mormons in America would have never demanded conversion so explicitly. Faith healing as a strategy not only continued in Britain, but even shed some of its stigma.

Healings also formed a regular part of British meetings, further expanding non-Mormon exposure to Mormon gifts of the gospel. Theodore Turley, who accompanied Quorum members such as Brigham Young to preach in Britain, shows in his diaries that faith healing was already forming a common part of Mormon meetings during the Quorum's visit. Not only writing that he "Laid hands on a number of sick" at meetings, Turley even notes that he

¹¹⁷ James Farmer "March 03, 1850".

¹¹⁸ James Farmer "September 24, 1851".

occasionally had to exorcise spirits from attendees.¹¹⁹ His healings were clearly done in front of strangers, and after one such session, he reported he has “4 follow me to my lodgins [sic] to enquire after the truth”.¹²⁰ While in America converts became more likely to experience healing the longer they engaged with Mormonism but delayed conversion, those inquiring into Mormonism in Britain were likely to witness healings at their first meeting.

Healing was the final technique in the British missionary’s repertoire, and as in America: Mormons had no more to offer if audiences still resisted baptism after this point. But even though British Mormons had fewer reservations about wielding the gift, the real expansion of its use traces back to the meeting hall. The reason faith healing as a technique was so controversial was due to the grey area between confirmed and potential believer, but meeting halls blurred these lines further. Potential converts in Britain were already treated like semi converts. When attending a meeting, they witnessed the same proceedings, heard the same sermons, and occasionally, experienced the same gifts that Mormons did. Even when potential converts were not being healed, they witnessed healings at meetings. In bringing together converts and non-converts, meeting halls increased the instances that non-converts were either healed or witnessed healings.

Mormonism across the Atlantic varied in subtle ways: preaching topics strayed further from the safest, private meetings were held with increased regularity, and the faith spread via a semi-permanent network of communities called ‘stakes’. Both American and British Mormonism ultimately stuck within the same six stages of techniques. The true difference is that American Mormonism revolved around preaching: missionaries travelled around a circuit, spreading their message to audiences of mostly non-believers, in locations such as

119 Theodore Turley “July 19, 1840”.

120 Theodore Turley “July 20, 1840”.

inns or town houses, which had no qualms hosting Mormonism's direct competitors as well. Meanwhile, British Mormonism revolved around meetings organised and run specifically for Mormons. These allowed the curious to attend and see the faith in action.

The British System Abroad

The British model soon became the gold standard for nineteenth-century Mormon missionary work across Europe and the British colonies. But what is most fascinating is that while these strategies developed in Britain due in part to local circumstances, the strategies were employed in other regions without regard for local circumstance. In other words, though the strategies developed in Britain adapted the American strategies to account for the local British context, when the strategies were then employed elsewhere, they varied little from the British missionary version. Three diaries in particular highlight that Mormon missionaries working beyond America and Britain drew upon the same strategies, and focused their work around meetings. John Van Cot was an American Mormon in charge of multiple British conferences in 1852, before being appointed President of the Scandinavian mission until 1856. Another American, John Lyman Smith, kept a diary of his time as the President of the Swiss and Italian mission from 1855 to 1857. Robert Skelton, a British born Mormon who partook in the failed mission to India from 1852-1856, kept a particularly comprehensive diary showing that the stages of missionary work continued all over the globe, and that they tended to lean more heavily on the British practices.

Mormon historian Reid L. Nielson has already developed his own "Euro-American" model of nineteenth-century Mormon missionary work. Nielson contrasts Mormon and Protestant missionary models. Protestant missionaries, he argues, were salaried, long term, formally trained missionaries, who were both proselytising and providing some kind of cultural instruction (such as schooling) in non-Christian, non-western fields. Meanwhile, Nielson

characterises Mormon missionaries as unpaid (Without Purse or Scrip), short term, informally trained missionaries who preached the Bible to mostly Anglo-Christians.¹²¹ Nielson argues that Mormons, “allocated an eye-popping 93 percent of their missionaries to the Atlantic world during the nineteenth century”, all while Protestants largely headed for the ‘uncivilized’ audiences in the colonies. While I agree that opening missions in European countries was exceptional, I disagree with his claim that Mormon missionary work was “lopsided” towards Europe and America due to various racial and theological concerns or that European efforts were to the neglect of colonial fields.¹²² However, I do agree with Nielson’s stance that they were logistically hampered. The most successful missions were then provided with more missionaries, while unsuccessful missions closed up shop. Scandinavia turned out to be an incredibly successful mission, leading to an enormous focus on the region. At the same time, unfruitful European missions faded away, while efforts in colonial fields continued. In fact, despite the Polynesian mission landing squarely outside of Europe, missionaries there generated success for nine years, halted only by their expulsion by the French. Meanwhile, missionaries in France recommended the mission’s closure after finding little success. Though the bulk of overseas missionaries travelled to Britain or Scandinavia, over thirteen percent of Mormon missionaries working outside of North and Central America travelled to colonial fields, with the percentage even higher if we were to consider the Native American outreaches ‘colonial’. If we view nineteenth-century Mormon missionary work as an effort to repeat the strategies developed or canonised in Britain, then it is clear that Mormons were not biased toward any particular region as much as missions succeeded or failed depending on the degree to which British strategies translated to local contexts.

121 Nielson, “The Nineteenth-Century Euro-American Mormon Missionary Model”.

122 Ibid., 83.

The most obvious reason overseas missions imitated the European mission was because the British mission essentially worked as the base of operations for all continental missions and British colony missions.¹²³ All American missionaries first passed through Liverpool on their way to the continent, with many also working there. The American Mormon Lorenzo Snow, accompanied by the British born T.B.H. Stenhouse and Italian born Joseph Toronto as the first missionaries in Italy, remained in Liverpool for some time researching the region.¹²⁴ The British Church president through much of the 1850s, Franklin D. Richards, appointed many missionaries working in Britain to the continent. He appointed an experienced missionary in Britain, John Vann Cot, to oversee the Scandinavian mission. John Lyman Smith, appointed to serve in Britain, was appointed by F.D. Richards to instead work Switzerland and Italy.¹²⁵ In fact, Richards obviously appointed many of the missionaries to the continent, with Smith writing that, “Pres F D Richards apointed H C Haight to go to the Scandanavian mission & relieve Br Vancott & Poor me to Go to Relieve br Tyler Prest of the Swiss & Italian mission.”¹²⁶ In other words, European missionaries were often appointed based on their experience within the British mission. As a result, it is no surprise that those missions were so heavily influenced by British strategies.

Luckily for the Scandinavian and Italian missionaries, the Mormon strategies translated quite well to their context. Just as the first missionaries in Britain found the religious monopoly on the wane, the first missionaries to Norway in 1850 arrived just seven years after

123 Whittaker, “Early Mormon Pamphleteering”, 238.

124 Michael W. Homer “‘Like the Rose in the Wilderness’: The Mormon Mission in the Kingdom of Sardinia”. *Mormon Historical Studies*, 1, no. 2 (2000), 31.

125 John Lyman Smith “undated entry” Smith, John Lyman (cousin of Joseph Smith) vol. 1, 1855-1856, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

126 John Lyman Smith “August 16, 1855”.

constitutional reform repealed the ban on lay preaching and informal religious gathering.¹²⁷ Unfortunately for the Mormons, they were formally deemed non-Christian by the Norwegian Superior court and therefore not actually protected under the laws. Regardless, law enforcement confused about what Mormonism was, whether it was legal, or whether their cases were on going, allowed Mormonism to hold meetings and publish tracts for years, even when it was not legal like in Britain.¹²⁸

Meanwhile, Lorenzo Snow and other Italian missionaries also benefitted from ongoing religious reforms. While stopping over in Liverpool, Snow decided to travel to Piedmont to target a group he had read about known as the Waldesians: a twelfth century religious group that later embraced the Protestant Reformation.¹²⁹ In 1848, just two years after Snow and his companions landed, the Waldesians were granted various civil and political rights, opening them up to higher education, professional training, and government office.¹³⁰ Neither Waldesians nor any other religious minority were allowed to proselytise, but since these restrictions were intended to retain the centrality of Catholicism, it seems there was not much effort to stop Mormons from converting minorities.

Diaries of continental missionaries reveal that they largely worked off the ‘Without Purse or Scrip’ model, while also publishing and avoiding debates in ways similar to the British model. In fact, one of the most comprehensive reasonings for the ‘Without Purse or Scrip’ doctrine comes from the advice given to John Lyman Smith soon after his arrival in Piedmont:

127 Johnnie, Glad, *The Mission of Mormonism in Norway 1851-1920: A Study and Analysis of the Reception Process*, (Frankfurt: Peter Land, 2006), 161, 168-174, 327-328.

128 Ibid., 215-216.

129 Homer “Like the Rose in the Wilderness”, 31.

130 Ibid.

Are we preaching the Gospel to these people with the Same faith that Paul preached it to the ancient inhabitants of Italy? He then gave Some good instructions on preaching the Gospel without purse or Script [sic] Said: - “No man, not even Brigham nor Heber, can preach the Gospel with faith & confidence in God, as the ancient apostles & prophets did, if he be Suplied with means from other Sources; but, on the other hand, if he go between God & the people, the lord will open his way before him& Bless his labours temporaly & Spiritually.¹³¹

As with the British strategies, continental missionaries did much of their proselytising via publications. The first tracts in Scandinavia were Erastus Snow’s *A Voice of Truth*, and Peter Olsen Hansen’s *En Advarsel til Folket* (A Warning to the People); both drew heavily on Pratt’s famous *A Voice of Warning* written during the first years of the British mission. John Van Cott would even report republishing copies of *A Voice of Warning* in 1855.¹³² Van Cott also reported shipping and distributing other tracts during his time there.¹³³ Meanwhile, Smith in Italy often printed, distributed and wrote the Mormon periodical: *Der Darsteller der Heiligen der letzten Tage* (The representative of the Latter-day Saints). Smith also reports asking missionaries to respond to unfavourable articles in local papers, though is careful to remain non-hostile by asking them to submit ‘corrections’ rather than challenge authors.¹³⁴ By at least 1860 Brigham Young advised all missionaries to “avoid debate and argument” and ordered them, “Don’t give the world cause to speak ill of you.”¹³⁵ Brigham Young was once the President of the British mission, and now as the President of the entire Church, was encouraging missionaries to take up the principles developed there. In other words, he was actively phasing out the argumentative style of early American Mormons, and instead making the practice of avoiding arguments official policy across the globe.

131 John Lyman Smith “September 19, 1855”.

132 John Vann Cott “March 06, 1855”.

133 For example, see John Van Cott's entries in ‘August 12, 1853’ and ‘March 16, 1855’.

134 John Lyman Smith “June 24, 1857”.

135 Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 60-61.

Apart from travelling with minimal means while using similar publications and avoiding debate, continental missionaries also adopted the meeting style. Missionaries constantly referred to their meetings, the attendees, and in particular, how many ‘strangers’ were in attendance. John Lyman Smith for example, wrote that he “adressed the Saints in the evening on the Subject of Tithing also Touched on the 1st principles of the Gospel 7 Strangers present.”¹³⁶ John Van Cott also wrote that he “Attended meeting in the Hall, had a large congregation who were attentive many strangers present”.¹³⁷ On regular occasions, both writers also record their reports on the membership rates in different regions: all sent to Britain, not to Utah.

Continental Mormons even used the faith healers’ pledge. Van Cott occasionally healed Mormons in meetings or at home, with multiple accounts of his travels to private homes to heal sick saints. Smith even healed those who were not yet converted, writing that, “In the Evening we walked 6 miles to visit a Sick woman that had wished to See us. Laid hands upon her after preaching Mormonism 1½ hours.”¹³⁸ Still, most healing occurred in meetings, reinforcing the use of the British style of missionary work.

But while religious reform in Italy and Norway gave the missions a shallow sense of similarity to Britain, the same could not be said of a mission like India. The use of the same strategies in a vastly different context reveals that strategies were employed with little consideration of the context. Though the British model was wholly unsuited to India, Mormons in these fields were unable to develop new methods. Missionaries in India tried

136 John Lyman Smith “October 12, 1856”.

137 John Van Cott “December 30, 1855” Van Cott, John vol. 1, 1852-1856, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

138 John Lyman Smith “July 07, 1857” Smith, John Lyman (cousin of Joseph Smith) vol. 2, 1857-1858, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

their best to hold meetings, but their audience was often directly or indirectly employed by another Church. As Robert Skelton wrote: “During the first few lectures which were delivered by Bro, Ballantyne we had a tolerable good turnout, but the Clergy being alarmed at their flocks attending our meetings, began to threaten them that they [sic] would turn them out of employment if they did not desist”.¹³⁹ The missionaries quickly gave up on the Indians, largely assuming they would be unable to see reason. Oddly enough, Skelton judged “Hindoos” for requiring “Supernatural evidence” to maintain their faith, perhaps ignoring the Mormons’ own use of faith healing. Though the effort was no more fruitful, Robert instead almost solely applied the British system to the colonists. He door-knocked and distributed tracts constantly, commenting that, “as usual I met with great opposition from all denominations of Christians.”¹⁴⁰ Meetings were difficult to organise, and even then were rarely attended. Without funding from the Church, the ‘Without Purse or Scrip doctrine left the missionaries leaning on any colonist they could, curious or not, to fund everything from their living expenses to their tract publishing.¹⁴¹ Finally Skelton wrote that, “Our expenses, for house rent, exceeding by far, the assistance received from our most favour able friends ...So we concluded to hire no more houses; - - and, that if the people will not furnish suitable places for preaching in; to leave them, and go where they will do it”.¹⁴² Note that even though their unfunded system clearly was not working, the missionaries blamed their audiences. In 1855, Brigham Young ordered the missionaries to close up. They had converted around eighty people.

139 Robert Skelton, “August 07, 1853”, Skelton, Robert Hodgson vol. 1, 1852-1856, 1854, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

140 Robert Skelton, “Undated entry”.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid.

The Italian, Scandinavian and Indian missionaries show us just how impactful the British mission was. Even a small overview of their work shows how strongly missionaries drew upon the standards set down in Britain. Even when strategies were not working, as seen in India, missionaries continued to draw upon the strategies developed for the British context. At the same time, the Scandinavian mission, drawing upon British strategies, proved to be one of the Church's most successful missions. In fact by 1950, forty five percent of Mormon members boasted partial Scandinavian heritage.¹⁴³ Thus the British mission should not be seen just as Mormonism's first overseas mission, but also as the place where Mormon missionaries matured from their origin as wandering American debaters, into organisers of entire communities.

Mormonism was founded in America by an American. It weaved a story that transplanted the biblical world to America, and even drew upon contemporary discussions about American beliefs in religious freedom. Furthermore, the techniques I initially classified into stages were all developed in the American religious context. But despite Mormonism's American origin and the American presence across leadership and administrative roles, missionaries in Britain quickly adapted and developed techniques that resonated with British audiences. This was possible since British missionaries were still doing much of the work in the field; many missionaries from America were in fact British converts returning to the home country on mission, and because many of the American-born missionaries sent to Britain were wholly inexperienced and only began learning the missionary trade after crossing the Atlantic. These missionaries navigated a culture with a different approach to religious competition, overcame legal restrictions to turn them into advantages, and adapted their techniques to cater for

¹⁴³ "Scandinavia, The Church in" John Langeland, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, edited by Daniel H. Ludlow, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 1264.

poorer audiences. The result was a system that centralised around meeting halls, with almost all techniques either taking place in those halls or pushing potential converts towards them. As for the wider impact of the British mission, there are clear indications that the British strategies were quickly entrenched, with missionaries struggling, or refusing, to adapt their techniques to the rest of the world. As Mormonism continued to spread throughout the nineteenth century, missionaries continued to replicate British, rather than American strategies. In other words, while Mormon techniques were founded in America, it was the British field that came to refine and define nineteenth-century Mormon missionary techniques.

Chapter 3: Strategies in Retention and Discipline

Previous chapters have explored the first five stages of Mormon missionary strategies. This chapter investigates retention: the sixth stage that occurred after baptism. In particular, this chapter considers religious ‘commitment mechanisms’ that sociologists propose successfully bind one’s self-identity to the group, and relates that framework to the work that early missionaries performed. Neither historians nor sociologists, however, have given sufficient attention to the essential but paradoxical role that excommunication played in retaining converts.

Sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter uses Mormonism as a prime example of successful use of “Commitment mechanisms” that ensure a religious group will retain its members.¹ Kanter identified six commitment mechanisms: sacrifice, investment, renunciation, communion, mortification and transcendence. These mechanisms are split into three categories.² Continuance mechanisms are designed to help individuals recognise that it is beneficial to remain part of the group. Sacrifice and Investment aid this by encouraging members to give up various pastimes or items in order to remain in the community and to contribute to the community’s growth and maintenance respectively. Cohesion mechanisms involve reorientating an individual’s social life to revolve around the group. Renunciation encourages this by reducing relationships with those outside of the community, while Communion involves anything that helps connect one member of the religious group to the group as a whole. Finally, Control mechanisms assistance a member to redefine their world-view to ensure that membership and obedience to the organisation are seen by the member as a moral

¹ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, “Commitment and Social Organization: A Study of Commitment Mechanisms in Utopian Communities” *American Sociological Review*, 33, no. 4 (1968), 499-517.

² *Ibid.*, 499.

necessity. Mortification refers to the systems that change members' behaviour, while Transcendence refers to identification with the organisation on a spiritual or esoteric level that goes beyond a simple social circle.³ This chapter investigates these mechanisms through a historical lens: identifying and evaluating them as they actually manifested in early Mormonism. Kanter's framework provides a useful way to think about the mechanisms behind Mormon retention strategies. However, it does not provide an adequate explanation for how religious groups, and Mormonism in particular, retain members during periods of crisis. Kanter insists that effective Cohesion mechanisms help the community withstand threats to its existence, however, these do not account for internal threats. In fact, many of these mechanisms may have even exacerbated crises of leadership or breakaway sects. I argue that the most important retention strategy for preventing and responding to internal crises was, paradoxically, excommunication. This chapter investigates the slew of excommunications that followed Mormonism's public announcement of polygamy in particular, and argues that this was part of an important strategy that helped the Church and its missionaries to respond to a backlash that risked causing mass apostasy on a scale far larger than the losses from excommunication.

Excommunication fits into the commitment mechanism framework only tangentially, and is rarely considered to aid in either conversion or retention. Nonetheless, the power to excommunicate was one of the most important tools in the missionary's repertoire. This may seem paradoxical: if missionaries aimed to increase the number of followers, then excommunications seem to be the antithesis of missionary work. In many ways excommunication seems much more at home with a religious community that emphasises isolation over proselytising. Indeed, isolationist sects that do not proselytise such as the

³ Ibid., 499-517.

Amish, Chasidic Jews, or even the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints (who broke away from the mainstream Church and continue to practice polygamy to the present day), have all earned reputations, fair or not, for excommunicating ‘troublesome’ members. On the other hand, religious streams that do not excommunicate can end up with multitudes of lapsed members who have functionally left the Church except for a technicality. Scholars studying particular Mormon missions often point to falling membership rates in order to criticise mission policies. These criticisms, however, assume that the Church should keep lapsed or transgressing members. In 1966, historian Phillip Taylor cited high excommunications as one of the major reasons for the drop in British mission membership after 1851.⁴ Twenty years later, historian Frederick S. Buchanan cited the same problems in relation to the Scottish mission specifically.⁵ However, these criticisms do not appreciate the value of excommunication. Historians have noted the high rates of Mormon excommunication, but not explored the role of this strategy in retention.

In fact, excommunication benefited the early Mormon Church’s retention efforts in three main ways. First, excommunication allowed missionaries to retain control of communities distant from central church leadership. Breakaway churches based on geography were a real possibility.⁶ Second, excommunication indirectly drew upon a number of commitment mechanisms to ensure that those who remained were extremely dedicated members. In a sense, excommunication was both a Mortification and Renunciation mechanism: excommunications were a threat that changed member behaviour, as well as the fact that

4 Phillip A.M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of their British Converts in the 19th Century*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), 20.

5 Frederick S. Buchanan, “The Ebb and Flow of Mormonism in Scotland, 1840-1900,” *BYU Studies Quarterly*, 27, no. 2 (1987), 32.

6 Edwin Firmage and Richard Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois press, 1988), 25.

sustained excommunications automatically resulted in remaining members ‘renouncing’ contact with at least one non-believer. Third, it was an effective form of crisis management.

The Gathering

Nineteenth-century North American Mormonism possessed one main retention strategy: gathering. Mormons believed that the Bible’s prophecies were to be literally fulfilled, which required ‘gathering’ the scattered children of Israel and the literal building of Zion and the Temple.⁷ In other words, gathering was the religiously motivated migration of Mormons. Since gathering was both an effective mechanism of Communion (connecting to the religious group as a whole) and Transcendence (spiritual or esoteric level identification with the group), saints who willingly gathered were considered solid converts.

In hindsight, the gathering process often brought more harm than good. To the chagrin of non-Mormon populations, the early gathering transformed regions. The first gathering in 1831 directed saints to Jackson County, Missouri. As the Mormon Missouri population grew in number and visibility, locals feared the ever-growing economic and political domination.⁸ In 1838, Mormons clashed with militias that had been raised against them by surrounding counties. Twenty-one Mormons were killed, including David Wyman Patten of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, before Joseph Smith surrendered. The terms of their surrender were severe: Mormon leaders were arrested, Mormons were to be expelled from Missouri, and their property was to be sold to recuperate the losses of Missourian settlers. Most Mormons then gathered to the Nauvoo, Illinois, where the population exploded until it rivalled Chicago

⁷ Doctrines and Covenants 124: 37-44.

⁸ J. Spencer Fluhman, “Anti-Mormonism and the making of religion in Antebellum America” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 2006), 94.

in size.⁹ The clashes in Illinois were even worse than in Missouri. In 1844, five Mormon leaders were arrested and taken to nearby Carthage. They were Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, Mormon militia leader John S. Fullmer, Church historian Willard Richards, and John Taylor; Taylor was one of the early British Mormons Pratt converted in Canada, and was the editor of Nauvoo's two main newspapers. On June 27, a mob burst into the jail, killing both Joseph and Hyrum Smith.¹⁰ It is a sad irony that the gathering system designed to keep Mormons safe, encouraged attacks, expulsions, and even the murder of Joseph Smith himself. One might then assume that gathering was therefore a miserable failure.¹¹ What is fascinating, however, was that the gathering was nonetheless a successful exercise in retention. Though many Mormons suffered greatly, this did not translate into notable drops in Mormon membership. In fact these hardships acted more as an effective 'sacrifice' retention mechanism, with Mormonism's greatest leaders and missionaries continued to be drawn from these persecuted communities.¹²

The Gathering policy extended beyond North America. Smith sent the first missionaries to Britain in 1837 with instructions go out, set up only the most basic structures necessary to maintaining missionaries, and then work on gathering the converts back to America. Brigham Young continued this policy across missions for decades. The best summary of this policy is found in Young's 1855 letter to the President of the Australian mission:

9 Steven C. Harper, "Dictated by Christ: Joseph Smith and the Politics of Revelation" *Journal of the Early Republic*, 26, no. 2 (2006), 304.

10 Dallin H Oaks and Marvin S Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 6-29.

11 J. Spencer Fluhman, *A Peculiar People: Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 10.

12 Kanter, "Commitment and Social Organization": 504-506.

You will, however, organise and regulate matters in the most judicious manner for the continuance of the work, but gather out the Saints and bring them with you as far as you shall be able to do so, leaving a sufficient number to continue the work. We find it best to gather out all the Saints as fast as it can be done consistently, leaving only labouring elders in the field.¹³

The final place of gathering was to the isolated Utah territory under Brigham Young's leadership. The region developed into a semi theocratic territory where the Mormons could build up Zion with relative safety while breaking the cycle of oppression seen in other regions. In Utah territory, Brigham Young could serve as both the Church president and territory's governor without giving many non-Mormons cause for alarm. But Utah was difficult and dangerous for American Mormons to travel to, and for overseas converts the problem was even worse.

Migration

The Gathering created new and severe challenges for the British mission. The economic impact of migrating across continents and leaving one's life behind made gathering far more difficult for British converts. It is hard to calculate the social cost of gathering for British converts, but we can assume that the cost was often higher than for Americans. North Americans leaving their lives behind is hardly trivial, since Mormons whose family were not also converting usually ended up bidding their family a permanent farewell, but for British Mormons there was little chance of ever returning. Luckily, social costs were at least partially alleviated. Many non-Mormon Britons were already migrating to the United States to forge a new life. The thousands of British Mormons who migrated were just a small percentage of the millions of British emigrants headed for America. In fact, many British Mormons were so keen to migrate that early missionaries asked them to wait lest the budding mission be

¹³ 'Brigham Young to Augustus Farnham' (31 January 1855) in, Marjorie Newton, "The Gathering of the Australian Saints in the 1850s" *Brigham Young University Studies*, 27, no. 2 (1987), 68

completely depleted of its converts. Of a larger concern was the economic burden: while many converts were keen to migrate, not all were able to afford the journey. As a result, British migration was always accompanied with an additional expectation: all that could afford to gather had to aid those who could not.¹⁴ But even with aid, Joseph Smith recommended a staggered migration.¹⁵ Wealthier converts were to migrate and establish themselves in the New World first. Poor converts would then find employment opportunities when they followed.¹⁶ Migration was successful for the first few years. From 1840-1842, 2800 Mormons emigrated to Nauvoo, Illinois. But after Joseph Smith's assassination in 1846, the migration rate plummeted accordingly.¹⁷

Brigham Young restored Mormonism's migration after he ascended to the presidency and the Church's new home and place of gathering was established in Salt Lake City, Utah. The formation of the Perpetual Emigration Fund (PEF) likely rescued the British mission and was one of the most important retention efforts implemented underneath Young's leadership. Young formed the PEF since the British mission was financially struggling in the interim after Smith's death. Set up in 1849, the PEF helped fund Mormons immigration to Salt Lake City. The system worked similarly to other indentured servitude projects in America. In order to cover labour shortages, 17th and 18th century planters paid for emigration costs for European migrants, who paid off the debt through work. Later, railway companies made similar agreements with Chinese workers when building the transcontinental rail road.¹⁸

14 James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin and David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles* (Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, 2009), 232-233.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 43-48.

18 Scott Alan Cars on "The perpetual Emigration Fund: Redemption, Servitude and Subsidized migration in America's Great Basin (PhD diss., University of Utah, 1998), 1-3.

Since employers needed the workers, they paid migration costs upfront in return for their labour. But unlike other such projects, the PEF was not a profit venture: its purpose was simply to aid in the emigration of Mormon saints. Beneficiaries of the PEF were then expected to pay back the loan once they were settled. Those funds were ‘perpetual’, since they were used to aid other migrants.¹⁹

The PEF embodied multiple commitment mechanisms. On one hand, the fund was an *investment mechanism* for those that contributed to its setup, as they really were investing in the longevity of the Church. Meanwhile, the fund was also an excellent *communion mechanism* for its beneficiaries. Communion mechanisms refer to practices that connect individuals to the wider religious group. By investing real money into converts, the PEF gave those converts tangible proof that their connection to Mormonism across the Atlantic was not just theoretical and the belief that they were going to build up Zion together was not simple rhetoric. The fund was ultimately successful. In 1848, the year before the establishment of the Fund, Mormon migration from Britain was just over 700 converts. The next year, the number of migrants exploded to over 2000.²⁰ Overall, 38,000 Mormons travelled on the PEF dime, however, the funds were often not repaid.²¹ There was some concern that opportunistic migrants might take advantage of the Mormon Church’s funds. Brigham Young speculated that some Britons were converting, receiving funding to migrate, then planning to run to California.²² Indeed, less than 25% of PEF debts were repaid, lending to the theory that Britons may have converted to Mormonism in order to exploit the Church into funding their

19 Carson “The perpetual Emigration Fund”, 3-4.

20 Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, 47.

21 Phillip A.M. Taylor “Why did British Mormons emigrate” *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 22, no. 3 (1954), 250.

22 Taylor “Why did British Mormons emigrate”, 269.

immigration to the United States.²³ However, Phillip A.M. Taylor observed that economic conditions in Britain did not alter Mormon migration rates.²⁴ Migration rates should have increased during times of economic hardship if people were exploiting the PEF. Instead it seems that, rather than from any spiritual deceit, the low PEF repayment rate stemmed more from the economic instability of Mormon migrants.

Personal Visits and Community Meetings

One of the most common day-to-day activities of many missionaries was simply visiting believers to resolve monetary, social, and even romantic disputes. This practice served as an excellent communion mechanism. Missionaries were often intimately involved in their converts' personal lives, acting as arbitrators and resolving social conflicts between or within Mormon households. William Clayton discussed quite mundane issues he intervened in while on mission in Britain:

Bro F & I have been with S Isherwood to her mothers- and learn as follows. That Sarah and her sister has been disagreeable with each other. Sarah has been impudent and saucy with her mother. has cleaned her shoes on the sunday. would not help to do any thing for her mother. she was out late at nights & we had talk with her sister & bro in law They both manifest a very bitter spirit & we have reason to believe they are more to blame than Sarah although she is much to blame. She promises to do better.²⁵

It cannot be overstated just how many seemingly inane entries about visiting a Mormon brother or sister fill the pages of missionary diaries. Missionaries held services, preached, and distributed pamphlets. For example, John Lyon visited a disillusioned couple, "owing to once

²³ Carson "The perpetual Emigration Fund", 103-106.

²⁴ Taylor "Why did British Mormons emigrate", 254-255.

²⁵ William Clayton, "Diary entry January 07, 1840" Clayton, William vol. 1, 1840-1842, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

hard feelings which they had to ward”.²⁶ It is not clear whether they have an issue with a particular elder, the community, or individuals, but after discussing this more social issue, Lyon also noted that, “Bro Clark, also spoke in very doubtful language of the gathering, and brought up passages from the 24 Chapter of Mathew to prove his assertions.”²⁷ John offered his own interpretation of the scripture, and why the Mormon efforts to gather believers to the United States was theologically sound. Ultimately, regular visitations gave missionaries the opportunity to retain converts through guidance on both temporal and spiritual matters.

Meetings and the preaching within them that formed the backbone of Mormonism’s British mission were also key to retaining members. Previous chapters have mostly analysed preaching topics in-so-far as they appealed to non-Mormons. However, a significant portion of Mormon preaching was directed at those already converted. If personal visits reinvigorated individual Mormons, meetings constantly tried to reinvigorate communities. Mormon missionaries such as Daniel Williams preached on topics such as “necessity of union and order in and among the priesthood”, which were clearly directed at the priesthood, not strangers.²⁸ The benefits of the meetings system even began to influence the Church in America, which had a comparatively deficient meeting system. Theoretically, North American Mormons gathered to places like Kirtland, Independence, Nauvoo, or Salt Lake City. As American converts under the immediate care of major Church leadership or even the prophet himself, there was no particular concern that these saints required meetings in order to retain them. These Mormons were considered confirmed. But in reality, American

26 John Lyon, “March 08, 1849” John Lyon vol.1, 1849, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

27 Ibid.

28 Daniel Williams, “December 20, 1850”, Williams, Daniel vol. 1, 1847-1852, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

Mormons were not always able or willing to move so freely, especially when oppression forced the place of gathering to change on multiple occasions. In practice, American Mormons did not always have well defined conferences and wards or Mormons specifically appointed to attend to isolated Mormon communities. Oddly, the gap in Mormonism's reach within America was partially filled by their overseas missions: as missionaries from America headed overseas, they usually passed through Mormon communities on their way to the East or West Coast. Though their final destination lay beyond America, the journey gave them some opportunity to make personal visits, even if they were one-off affairs. Furthermore, these journeys helped the missionaries practice their preaching. John Van Cott for example, was an inexperienced preacher when he left on mission. His journey towards his appointment as the head of the Scandinavian mission began when he started practising preaching to all-Mormon crowds.²⁹

Even American missionaries began adopting British meeting styles. Californian missionaries writing in the 1850s regularly wrote of their local meetings, as well as the visitations they made to Mormons within their appointed region.³⁰ Caroline Crosby's Californian entries note many meetings where "The sacrament was administered" or where people were re-baptised.³¹ In some cases she mentioned the presence of 'strangers' as well.³² It was worth adopting the meeting system since it was effective commitment mechanism of both *cohesion* and *mortification*. In other words, meetings orientated social lives towards the community, while

29 John Van Cott "December 25, 1852" Van Cott, John vol. 1, 1852-1856, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

30 Boyle, Henry Green vol. 03, 1857 L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

31 Caroline Crosby, "Journal, 6 September 1852 to 20 January 1854" in *No Place to Call Home: The 1807-1857 Life Writings of Caroline Barnes Crosby, Chronicler of Outlying Mormon Communities*, edited by Edward Leo Lyman, Susan Ward Payne and S. George Ellsworth (Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005), 178-179.

32 Ibid.

also serving through both discipline and preaching as a method of altering members' behaviour.

Purses and Scrips

The Mormon method of unfunded travelling (known as 'Without Purse or Scrip') was an important way of retaining the missionaries themselves. Kanter argued that many religious groups demand sacrifices, such as those requiring members to abstain from joyful activities (temperance or celibacy are common examples) or to participate in difficult activities such as fasting.³³ She argues that paying a high price to remain part of a faith actually increases the members' perception of the value of the religion. The incredible hardships that Mormon missionaries faced seem exactly like the "vow of poverty" that Kanter argues will "aid commitment".³⁴ Missionary autobiographies tell grand tales of adventure, but also recollect harsh journeys. As already covered, missionaries in America traversed harsh lands and faced harsher audiences. American Mormons travelling overseas and overseas Mormons migrating to America faced enormous challenges once the Church was based in isolated Utah. Louisa Barnes Pratt reported sickness outbreaks during their treks to California and travels to the Hawaiian mission.³⁵ John Lyman Smith was so sick preceding his journey that he wrote that "altho I am not yet able to Stand alone I told him [Brigham Young] that I was going".³⁶ His travels were made only worse during outbreaks of cholera.³⁷ Entries like Henry Green Boyle

33 Kanter, "Commitment and Social Organization", 504-506.

34 Ibid., 505.

35 Louisa Barnes Pratt Memoirs, "Spring 1846 to September 1848" (1850) *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer*, edited by George Ellsworth (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), 84.

36 John Lyman Smith, "Diary Entry, May 07" Smith, John Lyman (cousin of Joseph Smith), vol. 1 1855, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

37 Smith, "Diary Entry, June 20".

were all too common: “This morning we buried... our beloved Sister Magee, & proceeded on our journey. Camped on the Desert between the Muddy & the Rio Virgin, we had to tie up our animals without feed, an Indian Stole a Blanket from one of our party.”³⁸ Like most Americans, Mormons feared Native Americans and often expressed concern about theft or raids. Most overseas missionaries such as Levi Savage from the Siamese mission, first had to travel expanses of America where they questioned the friendliness of every Native American encounter.³⁹ For many missionaries, their challenges were not abated when they reached new continents, with Skelton and other missionaries in India reporting near constant illness for the years they worked there.⁴⁰ Believers paid high prices to serve as missionaries, but once paid, they could be counted to remain in the Church much more reliably than with a mere baptism.

The Purse or Scrip doctrine was unique when compared to other nineteenth-century Protestant missions.⁴¹ However, as the Church expanded into multiple missions around the world through the 1850s, it became increasingly worried that the system’s flaws were outweighing its benefits. Costs of migration for example, were not the only financial strain on the British mission. The mission was in an expensive cycle where the lack of funds led to delays in British migration, while delayed migrations simultaneously extended the length and costs of the mission. Overseas missions needed to cover a multitude of expenses including

38 Henry Green Boyle, “January 25, 1858”, Boyle, Henry Green Boyle vol 04, 1858-67, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. Boyle originally wrote both “the beloved” and “our beloved”, but one was picked for this quote.

39 Levi Savage, “September 15, 1856” Savage, Levi. Vol. 7, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

40 Robert Skelton, “January 28, 1853, June 19, 1853”, Skelton, Robert Hodgson vol. 1, 1852-1856, 1854, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. There are also a series of relevant undated entries.

41 Reid L. Nielson, “The Nineteenth-Century Euro-American Mormon Missionary Model” in *Go Ye into All The World: The Growth & Development of Mormon Missionary Work*, edited by Reid L. Nielson and Fred E. Woods (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University press, Deseret Book Company, 2012).

publishing costs, hall hire, and travel expenses. The unfunded methods allowed the Church to extend its reach quickly, but it did not eliminate the need for funding. Instead, the costs were passed on to the missionaries' own audiences. Funds were raised via tithing, and it fell to missionaries to encourage their flocks to tithe.

Tithing had some benefits as commitment mechanism. If someone believes something has a high value, such as membership in the Church, they are willing to pay a high price, such as 10% of their income.⁴² James Lovett Bunting, the British convert-turned-missionary and President of the Manchester Conference often preached to British Mormons on the importance of tithing, and recorded other missionaries preaching on the same topic.⁴³ While tithing theoretically meant a donation of 10% of one's income, the British mission was often more flexible. In fact, John Lyon reports collecting tithes that encompassed a lot more than cash. Donated items included: cornmeal, flour, cheese, fish, meat, soup, butter, a broom, and even tobacco.⁴⁴ While an 1833 revelation discouraged the use of tobacco, it was still making its way into Church donations in as late as 1849.

Still, tithing could not raise the funds required for mission upkeep, leading to a fund-raising system that disillusioned many of the converts they sought to retain. With Mormons like James Farmer encouraging British members to donate once a week to the PEF, overseas missionaries squeezed their flocks for funds.⁴⁵ John Lyman Smith regularly made diary entries that said little more than that he, "adressed [sic] the Saints on Tithing PEF Donations,

42 Kanter, "Commitment and Social Organisation", 504-505.

43 James Lovett Bunting diaries entries "January 10" and "January 12, 1858" Bunting, James Lovett vol. 1, 1857-1858, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

44 James Farmer "June 26, 1849" Farmer, James vol. 1, 1851-1853, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

45 James Farmer "Feb 24, 1852".

[and] Temple offering[s].”⁴⁶ The ask was too much for some, with many refusing to tithe. As we will see below, the common response to those refusing to tithe was excommunication. This might support the argument that fund-raising was detrimental to Mormon retention efforts.

However, while Mormon fund-raising was not perfect, it was still a net benefit. If we contrast the British and continental European missions to others, it is clear how much worse retention was without funds. In India, the mission never reached a critical mass that would enable the Church to draw enough funds from its members. Because missionaries like Robert Skelton could not draw sufficient funds from Mormon converts, they had to ask for help from their non-Mormon audiences. As a result, Indian missionaries were the antithesis of early Mormon preachers in America: American Mormons were often given free food and board at inns, because landlords believed that Mormons were interesting entertainment for their guests. On the other hand, those showing even slight interest in Mormonism in India were shafted with economic burdens before one had even converted: missionaries begged their audience for funds to hire halls, travel, and publish.⁴⁷ In fact, the first convert in India ultimately left the Church over this very issue.⁴⁸ Eventually, the Church phased out ‘Without Purse or Scrip’ over the coming decades in favour of missions with more funding and planning.⁴⁹

46 John Lyman Smith “ June 22, 1856” Smith, John Lyman (cousin of Joseph Smith), vol.1 1855-1856, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

47 See David J. Whittaker, “Richard Ballantyne and the Defense of Mormonism in India in the 1850s,” in *Supporting Saints: Life Stories of Nineteenth-Century Mormons*, edited by Donald Q. Cannon and David J. Whittaker (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1985), 175–212.

48 Ibid.

49 William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), 56-57.

Discipline and Authority

Stringent discipline was important to the Church because loss of confidence in Church leadership could quickly spread, leading to breakaway sects, mass apostasy, or even a complete collapse. In fact, one of Mormonism's early competitors, the Millerites, disappeared almost overnight. The Millerites followed their leader, Alfred Miller, who predicted the date of Jesus's second coming to be October 22, 1844. When the day came and went without incident, many offered various excuses, leading to factional splits. However, many simply lost confidence in the leadership. Thousands of followers left the Church to return to their previous churches or join new ones.⁵⁰

When the behaviour or opinions of a convert were too extreme to be solved by a preaching topic or personal visit, missionaries swiftly moved on to formal disciplinary action at public meetings. Missionaries were also subject to these proceedings if they drifted too far from the Church's teachings. Legal scholars Edwin Firmage and Richard Mangrum argued that these community based trials fostered an "atmosphere where members largely controlled community standards" which was, "known for its anti-legalistic sentiments."⁵¹ However, local Elders were tasked with dealing out justice largely due to the practical reality that Church leadership was unable to administer justice from isolated Utah to all of its chapters across the U.S. and abroad. Mission leaders were in contact with local areas in regards to their membership, and the Church was in contact with mission leaders in turn. Furthermore, while communities may have felt a sense of control, it was still within an environment where the highest positions of power were staffed by American missionaries. In practice, these

⁵⁰ Matt McCook "Aliens in the World: Sectarians, Secularism and the Second Great Awakening" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2005), 54-84.

⁵¹ Firmage and Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts*, 25.

missionaries, and therefore their communities, never strayed from the Church or from one another in meaningful ways. As a result, Mormon disciplinary proceedings were directly transplanted to new regions with little regard for context.

The Mormon Church was hit by a mass exodus of its own in 1837, and the Church was keen to ensure it would be the last time. In 1831, the town of Kirtland, Ohio was selected for the building of the Mormon Temple. Like Jackson County, this too developed into a popular place to gather. In 1836, Joseph Smith proposed opening the ‘Kirtland Safety Society’ (KSS): a private Mormon banking company that issued and backed its own currency. Historians have noted the utter mismanagement of the Kirtland Safety Society, and indeed by February 1837 the organisation collapsed, to the shock of its investors.⁵² Historian Fawn Brodie suspected that deception drove the Kirtland Safety Society’s management. In contrast, Marvin S. Hill convincingly absolved Smith of fraud and embezzlement, conceding instead that management of the KSS was simply incompetent.⁵³ Regardless, converts were faced with the realisation that their prophet was fallible. Technically, Smith had not actually prophesied the bank’s success, but followers saw his public confidence in the project as a functional equivalent. The Church saw multiple groups break away, to the point where the Mormons coined the term ‘jumpers’ to refer to the slew of apostates following one after another.⁵⁴ This observation does in fact seem to match sociologists Stark and Finke’s theories about mass conversions. They argue that mass conversions are not moments of religious clarity, but a social domino effect where each individual’s conversion decreases the social cost of

52 Harper, “Dictated by Christ”, 288.

53 Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963), 194-196; Marvin S. Hill “Cultural Crisis in the Mormon Kingdom: A Reconsideration of the Causes of Kirtland Dissent” *Church History*, 49, no. 3 (1980), 286-297.

54 Wilford Goodliffe “American frontier religion: Mormons and their Dissenters 1830-1900.” (PhD. diss., University of Idaho, 1976), 126-127.

conversion for their family and friends. As more people convert, the social pressure to also convert increases.⁵⁵ Ultimately, the Kirtland community experienced this social pressure in reverse, with historians estimating that the region lost as much as 25% of the Mormon population.⁵⁶

Mormonism's disciplinary system took after the methods practised by the Church's competitors. Most Second Great Awakening churches drew upon a Puritan tradition of holding sinners publicly accountable.⁵⁷ In Britain, dissenter churches believed that because the state sponsored Anglican Church attempted to cater for the entire population, it necessarily turned a blind eye to sin and therefore tainted its legitimacy.⁵⁸ For Methodists and Baptists on both sides of the Atlantic, publicly reprimanding, punishing, or even casting out those who committed serious religious offences proved their good work and purity. Some churches even produced standing disciplinary committees who investigated claims and ran disciplinary hearings.⁵⁹ But while excommunication was sometimes considered necessary, most sinners avoided it by sincerely repenting and re-expressing their submission to the authority of the church. 'Private' offences such quarrelling or neglecting duties were considered less serious than those that shamed either the church or Christ, but almost all members who wholeheartedly repented, without reservation or excuse, were fully restored.

55 Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religious*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California press: 2000), 119.

56 Jordan Bell "The Kirtland Safety Society and Its Effect on the Faith of the Latter-day Saints" *BYU Religious Education Student Symposium*, 2012 URL: <https://rsc.byu.edu/pt-pt/archived/byu-religious-education-student-symposium-2012/kirtland-safety-society-and-its-effect-faith> (accessed March 2017).

57 This general overview of excommunication is drawn from: Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 13-14, 30.

58 David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850*, (Essex: Hutchinson & Co, 1984), 59.

59 Wills, *Democratic Religion*, 22.

Even when members were excommunicated, most churches believed it would encourage the sinners to repent. Once they did, they would be restored.⁶⁰

Historian Gregory A. Willis nonetheless contends that these systems of authority often caused more harm than good for churches.⁶¹ Willis argues that Baptists especially, who excommunicated as much as 2% of their population during the antebellum period, found that membership remained low even when attendance was high.⁶² Rather than officially joining the church, many remained as unaffiliated “hearers”. As long as someone remained a hearer, they could avoid scrutiny by the church, and avoid the associated public shaming.

Mormon missionaries took the task of ensuring that negative attitudes or thoughts did not spread and disillusion entire communities seriously. Like their competitors, discipline was public with most accusations of misconduct deliberated upon at local meetings. When missionaries themselves were under investigation they had their matters discussed at conferences: where Mormon leaders also organised finances, assessed mission performance, identified new areas to expand the mission and appointed leadership positions. Some regions even appointed disciplinary committees, who as missionary Oliver Boardman Huntington put it; “were delegated to visit al [sic] the cold and indifferent membes [sic]” in order to carry out a “cleaning up” of the Church.⁶³ Daniel Williams, who regularly acted as a clerk at these conferences, and therefore recorded various reprimands, reveals just how quickly the Church would forgive, as long as they repented. While some were in trouble for specific acts such as “drinking too much Beer” or refusing to tithe, the charge he most frequently recorded was

⁶⁰ Ibid., 12, 30-31.

⁶¹ Ibid., 14-15.

⁶² Ibid., 14-15, 22, 42.

⁶³ Oliver Boardman Huntington “Diary entry, March 12, 1847” Huntington, Oliver Boardman book 5, 1846-1847, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

that of “neglecting their place”, or in other words, for failing to attend meetings or fulfil their roles as teachers or deacons.⁶⁴ As with other churches, Mormons were forgiving. Entries like James Farmer’s are common, reporting that, “Bro Richard Greasley was brought up for public transgression. He acknowledged his fault and was forgiven.”⁶⁵ In other words, punishment was temporary, or even non-existent, as long as the guilty party genuinely repented their actions.

Excommunication

Excommunications were the natural extension of Mormonism’s disciplinary system, and an essential part of its retention strategy. However, historians have largely neglected the strategic value of excommunication. In fact, scholarly attention given to Mormon excommunications as a whole is inconsistent, depending heavily on the degree to which historians view Mormonism as hierarchical. Those that view Mormonism as a populist, democratic church seem to completely ignore excommunications. Nathan Hatch, who called Joseph Smith a populist and the Book of Mormon a criticism of the learned and wealthy, declared that, “Mormonism returned power to illiterate men such as themselves.”⁶⁶ More recent scholars have argued that Mormonism was particularly hierarchical, with J. Spencer Fluhman proposing that Mormonism drew as much from Catholic tradition as it did from

64 Daniel Williams' entries: “March 14, 1851”, “July 22, 1851” “August 15, 1851” “August 19, 1851”, “September 26, 1851”, “June 04, 1852”, Williams, Daniel vol. 1, 1847-1852, Turley L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

65 James Farmer “May 23, 1851”, Farmer, James vol. 1, 1851-1853, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

66 Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, (Yale University Press: New Haven & London, 1989), 121-122; Marianne Perciaccante, “Backlash Against Formalism: Early Mormonism's Appeal in Jefferson County” *Journal of Mormon History*, 19, no. 2 (1993), 35-63; See chapter “Away from ritual” in Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

Protestantism.⁶⁷ Mormon historian Steven C. Harper beautifully illustrates Smith's authoritarian leadership style. On one hand, Harper observes that Joseph Smith's decisions were not followed without question: Mormons engaged with God, and did not have to believe or agree with the personal opinions of New England farm boy Joseph Smith. On the other hand, Smith's statements were increasingly encased in prophecy to the point where there were few non-prophetic statements to distinguish from the prophetic ones.⁶⁸ Mormons may have theoretically been able to disagree with Joseph Smith the man, but Smith was quickly acting as Joseph Smith the prophet exclusively.⁶⁹ Furthermore, these prophecies reinforced the Church's hierarchy. In 1835 Smith clarified through prophecy the expectations of those who held priesthood (Elders), and reiterated that only those with that title could "hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church".⁷⁰ Furthermore, he established the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as "special witnesses of the name of Christ" who were granted extra authority beyond mere priesthood in order to administer to the Church in ways that otherwise only Joseph Smith could.⁷¹ Next in the hierarchy, Smith established the Quorum of the Seventy: who were to oversee and aid the Twelve in spreading Mormonism. Therefore, even if one was to only discuss Mormonism up until 1836 as Perciaccante does, it is clear that Mormonism was already intensely hierarchical.

Excommunication has seen attention from historians who emphasise the hierarchical nature of Mormonism. However, these scholars have generally concentrated on the high profile excommunications in America that signified major milestones in the Church's leadership,

⁶⁷ Fluhman, "A Peculiar People", 4-5.

⁶⁸ Harper, "Dictated by Christ", 281-284.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Doctrine and Covenants: 107.

⁷¹ Ibid.

rather than the excommunications carried out by missionaries out in the field on a daily basis. J Spencer Fluhman for example, concentrates on the creation of off shoot churches.⁷² Other historians discuss the ‘Nauvoo Expositor’: a paper founded by reformers who criticised Joseph Smith, until their publishing house was ‘accidentally’ set ablaze.⁷³ ‘Zion in the Courts’ dedicates half of its chapter on the Mormon legal system to high profile excommunications.⁷⁴ The example given the most attention by scholars is Sydney Rigdon’s excommunication, given that Rigdon was very nearly the new leader of the Church instead of Brigham Young.⁷⁵ A Baptist minister in Ohio, Rigdon converted in 1830 after finding out about the Book of Mormon from Parley Parker Pratt, an ex-member of his flock. Rigdon encouraged hundreds to convert. Rigdon was so successful in the region around Kirtland, Ohio that Smith to choose the town for the site of their Temple. Even joining in prophesying himself, he was eventually perceived as the man behind the throne. The earliest anti-Mormons actually dismissed Smith as illiterate, instead accusing Rigdon as the Book of Mormon’s true author.⁷⁶ Once Smith was murdered, the Church was gripped by a succession crisis that ended in a vote for Brigham Young, over Rigdon. When Rigdon continued to gather support for his cause, he and his followers were excommunicated.⁷⁷ Events like these are major milestones where the history of the Church could have taken a significantly

72 Fluhman “Anti-Mormonism and the making of religion in Antebellum America”; Fluhman, *A Peculiar People*, 82-83.

73 Goodliffe “American frontier religion”, 92-94.

74 Firmage and Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts*, 37-46.

75 Carson “The Perpetual Emigrating Fund”, 9.

76 Seth Bryant Et.al “Conversion and Retention in Mormonism”, 756-785 in *Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*, edited by Lewis R. Rambo, Charles E. Farhadian (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 761.

77 McCook “Aliens in the World”, 51, 99., Fluhman “Anti-Mormonism and the making of religion in Antebellum America”, 56.

alternate direction. However, this handful of high profile excommunications do not provide insight into the significance and purpose of the thousands of excommunication rulings.

Excommunication was a last resort, but an essential role that allowed missionaries to retain control of communities distant from central church leadership. Reserved for both the unrepentant and for particularly offensive sins, missionaries could not allow members to believe that the Church would turn a blind eye to sin lest discontented church members spread disillusionment throughout the community. As a result, excommunications were an essential *Mortification* and *Renunciation* mechanism that guided member behaviour and quarantined believers from critics. As mentioned above, an honestly repentant person was usually forgiven. Arguing, rumour-mongering, or even doubting Church teachings all attracted reprimand, but a confession and apology were usually sufficient. Confession and apology, however, were non-negotiable: refusing to admit fault almost always resulted in excommunication. In many instances people were not cut off because of what they did, but because they refused to accept blame or repent. Daniel Williams reported that after various minor transgressions, “John Bagshaw and Harriot Dawkins and Hannah Phillip were cut off for obstinately refusing to repent of their sins”.⁷⁸ The missionary Charles Alfred Harper even cut a man off for disagreeing with an excommunication ruling against someone else.⁷⁹ Like many Mormon missionaries, Harper had little patience for unrepentant members, summarising one council as a, “night to hear the excuses of those that had been delinquent in their duties”.⁸⁰

78 Daniel Williams “December 06, 1850”.

79 Charles Alfred Harper “January 29, 1855”.

80 Charles Alfred Harper “April 03, 1854”.

Missionaries had to fear excommunication just as much as their converts. Abraham Owen Smoot recorded many details about an 1836 conference held near the Tennessee/Kentucky border.⁸¹ In particular, the charge made against Elder Daniel Cathacart for “unchristian-like conduct” provides us with an excellent example of the way the Church controlled both the conduct and theology of their Elders:

Teacher B. Clapp testified that Brother Cathacart told one of the sister that he had a secret which he wished to communicate to her, which was this that our Elders were charged of walking out with colored women, and that our Church heed long communion with the Indians, also indulging in teaching. Elder Boydston testified...that Brother Cathacart carried a trace [brace] of pistols and often exhibited them and boasted of what he had done and would do, and at times manifested a Spirit of bigotry. He was also accused of being dogmatical in his teachings especial concerning the Word of Wisdom. Elder Woodruff testified that Elder Cathacart carried apothecary medicines and that his teaching was harsh and over-bearing; also that John the Baptist was not a heir of the celestial Kingdom.⁸²

The details of some accusations are not clear. For example, it is difficult to interpret whether Brother Cathacart was denying the Church’s engagement with Indians, or whether “heed” should say ‘had’, and that he was in trouble for publicly discussing the Church’s engagement with Native Americans. It is also worth noting that the Church’s racial theology was still developing during this period. While the Church would eventually adopt particularly racist stances, in 1836 the Church was still navigating the fact that its leadership and members were mostly from Northern, non-slave owning backgrounds, while simultaneously living and preaching in slave states.⁸³ However, we can see that unchristian like conduct included both actions, (bigotry, harshness and boasting) and theological beliefs: such as those concerning

81 AbrahamOwen Smoot “ May 28, 1836 “ Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, 1836, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602. Some locations do not seem to be correctly recorded, but conference was most likely held in Tennessee.

82 Ibid.

83 Lester E. Bush Jr. “Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 8 (1973), 54-68.

John the Baptist. Cathcart satisfied his accusers by repenting quickly, but he would not be the last of troublesome Mormons. As the Church expanded its mission, so too did opportunities for isolated missionaries to lead their communities astray or to take advantage of their position for financial (or sexual) gains. Isaac Russell, one of the early British converts Parley P. Pratt converted in Canada, took the Mormons under his charge during the 1838 Missouri Mormon War and formed his own church. Though there is a case to be made that Russell had good intentions and simply feared for the future of the Church during the conflict, he was eventually excommunicated.⁸⁴ The same could not be said of Walter Murray Gibson: one of the Church's more infamous rogue missionaries. Working in the Hawaiian mission, Gibson was eventually caught selling church offices as well as granting formal offices to women. He was excommunicated in 1864.⁸⁵

The Church mostly had to ensure that its missionaries were actually preaching its teachings, but another major concern was that failing to crack down on sinners would inspire the most adamant believers to leave the Church. Historian Wilford Goodliffe observed that many were disillusioned not because they lacked belief, but because they felt they had transcended the Church in its current form. In many instances, righteous religious fervour from more pious missionaries led them to proclaim themselves prophets.⁸⁶ Wilford Goodliffe called attention to three early converts: John Noah, A. Horton and Wycam Clark. All three broke away or were excommunicated after not just claiming they now possessed the power of prophecy, but for claiming that Joseph Smith lost his own gift of prophecy due to weak leadership and a

84 Scott C. Esplin "Remembering the Impact of British Missionary Isaac Russell" in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: The British Isles*, edited by Cynthia Doxey, Robert C. Freeman, Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, and Dennis A. Wright, (Brigham Young University Press: Provo, 2007).

85 Jacob Adler, "The Political Debut of Walter Murray Gibson", *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, 18. (1984), 96.

86 Goodliffe "American frontier religion", 156-157.

reluctance to discipline sin.⁸⁷ Again, maintenance of authority underpins much of the Church's disciplinary action.

While challenging the Church's authority was a fast track to excommunication, not all accusations of misconduct were automatically valid or taken seriously by missionaries. Occasionally missionaries outright dismissed accusations they thought were baseless. When John Lyon attended a meeting over accusations against one Sister, he recorded that the accusations, "appeared wholly to be groundless."⁸⁸ Instead, they concluded that her accuser, "manifested a bad spirit".⁸⁹ Attributing acts to bad spirit may sound like metaphor for a bad attitude, but Mormons did indeed believe that Satan worked in the form of bad spirits that could mislead people.⁹⁰ This belief gave false accusers a benefit of the doubt, with missionaries assuming, or perhaps excusing, baseless accusations as a deception from bad spirits rather than an act of outright malice.

As the diary of William Farrer reveals, the Mormon presumption of innocence even mimicked courts of law. Though Farrer laboured as a missionary in Hawaii, he had learned the missionary craft in the British way, having been born in Britain and first seen the missionaries in 1841 at twenty years of age. Speaking with one local member, Elder Hosea, he learned that Hosea had been cut off from the Church for riding a horse indoors while drunk. Hosea denied the drunkenness (though admitted to the horse riding) but told Farrer that, "he had been cut off without being visited by the officers."⁹¹ Whatever Farrer's reaction

⁸⁷ Goodliffe "American frontier religions", 126-129.

⁸⁸ John Lyon, "June 04, 1849".

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Doctrines and Covenants: 50:2.

⁹¹ William Farrer, "Diary entry July 2 1854" Farrer, William vol. 6, 1853-1854, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

to this strange story was, he did not record it. However, the issue of whether or not he had been visited by officers of the Church concerned Farrer far more than any drunken indoor horse riding. Telling them that, “their action was not legal”, Farrer told them that Hosea’s case would have to be brought up at the next conference, and only after they paid him a visit.

⁹² In other words, Hosea was improperly cut off because accused members were supposed to have formal hearings: giving them the chance to defend themselves or at least give them the opportunity to repent before a decision was made. However, this was a custom rather than a Mormon law: there is no actual requirement that members needed to be officially summoned.⁹³ Missionaries usually mentioned visits of this kind, but there was little implication that this was any kind of theological requirement. Luckily for Hosea, his punishment was downgraded significantly as a result of Farrer’s intervention:

...held council meeting with the officers to investigate the case of Hosea...they stated that it was on account of his drinking beer & making a disturbance in the place by riding on horseback into the house of the judge of the district & for neglecting his duty as president of the branch... & after a careful investigation of the case could find nothing to prove that he had been drinking or drunk but acknowledged horse riding inprudently [sic] which he was sorry for & intended to be more careful in the future.⁹⁴

Accounts like Farrer’s are important for multiple reasons. While these disciplinary proceedings were generally developed from above, the fact that Farrer references a seemingly non-existent Mormon law may show evidence of ‘cultural’ development of Mormon disciplinary work from below. Almost all religions have doctrines that are considered law, even if such a law cannot be found in the usual foundational texts. In this sense, the widespread practice of visiting and discussing the accusations with the relevant person seems

⁹² William Farrer “Diary entry July 02, 1854”.

⁹³ Firmage and Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts*, 29-30.

⁹⁴ William Farrer “Diary entry “July 09, 1854”.

to have developed to become almost indistinguishable from formal Mormon theology. Second, it shows that while excommunications were sometimes harsh, these were not delirious witch-hunts. Missionaries understood how serious these accusations were, and did not want to punish people beyond what was absolutely necessary.

Since missionaries hoped that excommunications would promote repentance, missionaries often visited those who were cut off and asked them to return. Meanwhile, some offenders returned to the Church and begged for forgiveness on their own accord. John Lyman Smith, who presided over the Swiss mission from 1855-1857 and then again from 1861-1864, freely cut off members. Missionary reports commonly mentioned both the baptism and cut off rates. There are rarely reports of zero excommunications, but occasional instances of the cut off rate matching the baptisms.⁹⁵ In one instance, a missionary reported cutting off as many as forty nine people in Zurich alone.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Smith also reported that he, “Sent letters to those which we had cut off”.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, other ex-Mormons sent letters wishing, “to be forgiven & return to the church.”⁹⁸ Apart from members who had themselves requested to leave the Church, it was on only very rare occasions that John Lyman Smith excommunicated members “of whom there is no hopes” of returning.⁹⁹

95 A selection of examples are found in: John Lyman Smith “June 29, 1861, September 30, 1861, December 19, 1861, December 24, 1861, February 04, 1862, April 06, 1862, June 30th 1862, December 31st 1862” Smith, John Lyman (cousin of Joseph Smith), vol. 4 1860-1863, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

96 John Lyman Smith “June 27, 1862” Smith, John Lyman (cousin of Joseph Smith), vol. 4 1860-1863, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

97 John Lyman Smith “July 23, 1857” Smith, John Lyman (cousin of Joseph Smith), vol. 2 1857-1858, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

98 Ibid.

99 John Lyman Smith “June 22, 1857”.

Some Mormon strategies leave us with questions about intention. The result of a strategy does not always mean missionaries intended the effect. This has been explored in previous chapters regarding the missionaries' lack of Books of Mormon. Meanwhile, the fact missionaries often repeated strategies regardless of local context shows that they did not always understand why strategies were or were not successful. However, it is clear that missionaries explicitly planned the effect that excommunication had on retaining and reinvigorating saints. As John Lyman Smith's entry on June 25th, 1861 reveals, he, "Gave instructions to Elders Gerber & Huber to go through the East District & visit the Saints & clean up the branches to trim off the dead limbs & see if they could not infuse some of the Spirit of the Gospel into the Priesthood & get them in working order".¹⁰⁰ Jonathan Stillman Woodbury, a missionary working in Hawaii, made remarks during one of his sermons: "[when a member sins] it is our duty to try & reclaim & heal it but if it cannot be cured but is like to sicken & distroy [sic] the whole body then it is necessary to amputate it & Seperate [sic] it all together [sic] from the body in order that it be may be preserved in a helthy [sic] state."¹⁰¹ Whether the metaphor is about tree branches or human limbs, the intention of excommunication is clear: missionaries believed excommunications, even en masse, maintained the community by spiritually reviving members and quarantining disillusionment.

Responding to the Plural Marriage Crisis

Mormon disciplinary action exploded through the 1850s, with many excommunications resulting from accusations of adultery. This crackdown coincides with the public announcement of polygamy in 1852. It attempted to defend the sanctity of the plural marriage

¹⁰⁰ John Lyman Smith "June 25, 1861".

¹⁰¹ Jonathan Stillman Woodbury "August 5, 1855" Woodbury, John Stillman vol. 10, 1855, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

doctrine, or at least make a clear distinction between the sinful act of adultery and the holy practice of polygamy. Therefore, cracking down on adultery was an attempt to quash a potential mass exodus not seen since the collapse of Kirtland. In Scotland for example, the excommunication rate actually outpaced the baptism rate in the years 1853, 1855 and 1856.¹⁰² In fact, from 1850-1859, missionaries excommunicated thirteen Mormons for every twenty baptisms.¹⁰³ Secondly, the charge of adultery was relatively rare before Mormonism's public announcement of the plural marriage in 1852. Afterwards, accounts from North America to Europe and even to the Polynesian, Indian and Siamese mission, all record formal accusations of adultery against converts, or even other missionaries. Thirdly, these accusations rarely resulted in excommunication before 1852, but almost always resulted in excommunication afterwards; repentance, no matter how sincere, was not sufficient. The rise in excommunications, the increased accusations of adultery in particular, as well as the harsher response to those accusations, all seem to show that there was a general crackdown on sexual misconduct in direct response to the polygamy announcement. The crackdown is understandable when considering the Church's fears of widespread apostasy in the face of converts' extensive backlash against the doctrine.

Mormon Polygamy was only practised in the shadows by the Church's upper echelons until its public announcement 1852. The origin of the practice is unclear. Historian Fawn Brodie speculated that Plural Marriage was concocted in 1831 in order to defend against certain accusations from Joseph Smith's wife Emma.¹⁰⁴ Other historians have pointed to the 1831 revelation encouraging Mormons and Native Americans to intermarry, speculating that the

102 Buchanan, "The Ebb and Flow of Mormonism in Scotland", 36.

103 Ibid.

104 Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 181-187.

revelation may have also included an off the record revelation on polygamy.¹⁰⁵ However, as the prophecy text was only published thirty years later, we cannot eliminate the possibility that that these revelations were altered to defend the theological validity of polygamy, or whether these prophecies even existed at all. The most reliable source comes from the diary of William Clayton, the prophet's scribe. Dating Polygamy to at least as far back as 1843, William Clayton recalled writing:

...a Revelation consisting of 10 pages on the order of the priesthood, showing the designs in Moses, Abraham, David and Solomon having many wives & concubines... Joseph & Hyrum presented it and read it to E.[mma Smith] who said she did not believe a word of it and appeared very rebellious.¹⁰⁶

Since the account implies that Emma had no knowledge of Polygamy until 1843, the 1831 claim seems unlikely. However, it is worth noting that the account does not invalidate Fawn Brodie's narrative, but rather pushes it forward twelve years. Either way, Emma Smith was not to be the last Mormon to rebel against the polygamy doctrine.

Many woman and men would join in Emma Smith's shock after the public announcement. Even otherwise dedicated Mormons were disillusioned by the doctrine. T.B.H. Stenhouse and his wife Fanny were dedicated saints who had joined Lorenzo Snow opening the Italian mission, yet both left in 1870 over Polygamy. The two published several scathing criticisms of the Church. While T.B.H. gave broad critiques from Church origins, to the Mountain

105 David J. Whittaker "Mormons and Native Americans: A Historical and Bibliographical Introduction", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 18, no. 4 (1985), 35.

106 *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, edited by George D. Smith, (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 110.

Meadows Massacre, Fanny directed her efforts directly at polygamy, publishing “Exposé of Polygamy: A Lady’s Life among the Mormons” in 1872.¹⁰⁷

The same year as the public announcement, perhaps sensing the coming backlash, Brigham Young sent missionaries across the globe. New missions opened in Siam and China and reinforcements were deployed to missions founded just a year before in regions such as Australia, India, Chile, Hawaii and Germany. Brigham Young’s decision to rapidly expand the scope of Mormon missions leading up to and after the public announcement of Polygamy was unlikely to have been a

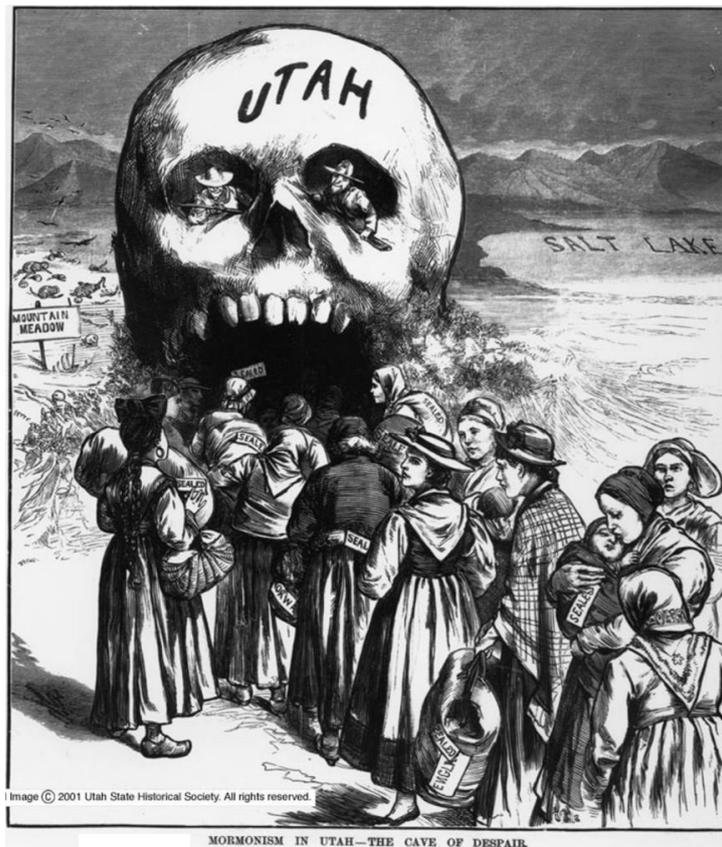


Fig.2

coincidence. These missionaries were the Church’s shock troops, sent across the globe to defend their controversial doctrine to both the general public and Mormon communities. When Robert Skelton travelled to the West Coast in order to sail on mission, some of the Mormons he stayed with were shocked by the Polygamy announcement:

¹⁰⁷ Fanny Stenhouse, *Exposé of polygamy in Utah, a Lady's Life Among the Mormons : a Record of Personal Experience as one of the Wives of a Mormon Elder During a Period of More Than Twenty Years*, (New York: Russell Brothers, 1872); T. B. H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain saints: a full and complete history of the Mormons, from the first vision of Joseph Smith to the last courtship of Brigham Young...and the development of the great mineral wealth of the territory of Utah*, (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1873).

We found the old Gentleman chopping wood at the wood pile close to his door... we called upon him with a view to solicit his assistance assuring him that the Lord would greatly bless him in so doing He then received us very cordially and introduced us to his kind Lady and Daughter also Step Daughter At first when we commenced conversation his Lady objected to Polygamy but after elucidating the principle to her was perfectly reconciled that it was ordained of God...¹⁰⁸

Thanks to missionaries like Robert, the Church was able to retain many of those who were taken aback by the doctrine, but the backlash from Mormons was nothing compared to hostility from anti-Mormons. After 1852, Mormons struggled to distinguish the religious doctrine of polygamy from the sin of adultery.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the early ‘Joseph Smith’ era of Mormonism, criticisms primarily focused on Mormonism as some kind of scam. Critics targeted Smith’s character, as well as the authenticity of the book of Mormon, in order to argue that followers were naive, and were possibly duped out of their savings.¹¹⁰ Brigham Young, however, led a Church constantly forced to defend polygamy. Mormons were suspected of going on missions overseas in order find women to gather back to Utah as wives. Mormonism no longer duped its converts; it was the male converts duping the women into a Church that would encourage harems. In its 1856 platform, the Republican Party affirmed opposition not just to slavery, but to polygamy as well, declaring, “it is both the right and the imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism — Polygamy, and Slavery.”¹¹¹ The next year Parley Parker Pratt was shot dead by a man named Hector McLean. Hector’s wife, Eleanor, had converted to Mormonism, run

108 Robert Skelton, “January 14, 1853”, Skelton, Robert Hodgson vol. 1, 1852-1856, 1853, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

109 Paula Kelly Harline, *The Polygamous Wives Writing Club: From the Diaries of Mormon Pioneer Women*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16.

110 Fluhman, *A Peculiar People*, 50.

111 Republican Party Platforms: “Republican Party Platform of 1856,” 1856, The American Presidency Project. URL: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29619> (last accessed March 2017).

away and ‘married’ Pratt without obtaining a divorce. From the Mormon perspective, Pratt had taken in a young mother who had run from her abusive husband to join the faith. However, the story hardly did much to alleviate the rumours that Mormon elders were stealing young women, or in this case, young wives. The culmination of all these attitudes is well captured in the 1882 illustration, *The Cave of Despair* (Fig. 2).¹¹²

Most missionaries struggled with how to deal with polygamy. In fact, if one relies on Mormon missionary sources, a reader could easily miss the doctrine’s existence entirely. The silence on the part of missionaries may explain why historians have failed to identify the plural marriage doctrine as one of the driving factors behind excommunications. Sticking to the ‘First Principles’, missionaries barely mentioned plural marriage in their sermons, and were so coy about the doctrine that few even allude to their own plurally married status. John Lyman Smith was married to both Augusta Bowen Cleveland and Mary Adelia Haight by the time he left for his first mission.¹¹³ John Vann Cott was married to two women, though one died before he partook on his first mission. However, he was married to three women during his second mission.¹¹⁴ Others such as Theodore Turley, Abraham Owen Smoot, Parley Parker Pratt, William Clayton, James Farmer, John D. Lee and Levi Savage all engaged in plural marriage after their missions.¹¹⁵ Charles Alfred Harper converted Harriet Taylor in Britain,

112 No illustrator listed, “Mormonism In Utah — The Cave of Despair,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, (1882 Feb 04).

113 Jeffrey S. Hardy “Overview of John Lyman Smith’s Diary” L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University URL: <https://lib.byu.edu/collections/mormon-missionary-diaries/about/diarists/john-lyman-smith/> (Last accessed July 2017).

114 Jeffrey S. Hardy “Overview of John Lyman Smith’s Diary” Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University URL: <https://lib.byu.edu/collections/mormon-missionary-diaries/about/diarists/john-van-cott/> (Last accessed July 2017).

115 See Jeffrey S. Hardy’s summaries of Theodore Turley, Abraham Owen Smoot, Parley Parker Pratt, William Clayton, James Farmer, John D. Lee and Levi Savage in: L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

and the two married after his return and her emigration to the U.S., though any courtship the two may have engaged in completely eludes Harper's Diary.¹¹⁶ It is however, unsurprising to find so few mentions of polygamy, since the general public had begun to view the missionaries as 'sensualists'.¹¹⁷

Charles Harper, like many of these polygamous missionaries, helped distance polygamy from sensualism by ridding the Church of a multitude of adulterous members.¹¹⁸ On October 25, 1853, a man was cast out for "Adultery and teaching false doctrine".¹¹⁹ Any extramarital relations were considered Adultery, including living under the same roof. In a case where the accused pleaded that men and women were living together for economic reasons, Harper still cast them out:

had been living in adultery acknowledged his living with a girl that was not his wife also sleeping with her in the same bed with a curtain between but denied having had sexual intercourse with her also [and?] that he had furnished lodgings for another man & woman that was not married and slept together the same as himself... I therefore made a motion that he be cut off from the Church which was seconded and carried unanimous¹²⁰

Missionaries across Britain reported excommunications based on Adultery, or in some cases, the synonymous crime of "fornication".¹²¹

116 Jeffrey S. Hardy "Overview of Charles Alfred Harper's Diary", TomPerry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University URL: <https://lib.byu.edu/collections/mormon-missionary-diaries/about/diarists/charles-alfred-harper/> (Last accessed July 2017).

117 Skelton, "undated entry".

118 see also: James Farmer "May 01, 1852".

119 Charles Alfred Harper "October 25, 1853".

120 Ibid.

121 Ajax Williams "undated entry "Ajax, William vol. 2, 1862, L. TomPerry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. These are recollections of 1855 events.

Missionaries cracked down on adultery regardless of region. In Hawaii, missionary William Farrer cut off “Bro. Opule & Sister Kahakapu for Adutery [sic]” as well as “Sister Kahue... for repeated acts of Adultery”.¹²² Another Polynesian missionary, Jonathan Stillman Woodbury, reported that “Sister Luisa was tred [sic] & cut of from the church for living [sic] with two men as husband with & not married to either, but changed from one to the other as circumstances made it convenient”.¹²³ In Scandinavia, John Van Cott excommunicated multiple adulterers who were in otherwise respected positions. One Mormon Elder was excommunicated for adultery, and in one case, the conference president of Gothenborg was excommunicated when they visited his residence and found, “his sweet heart was loging [sic] in the same room”.¹²⁴ One of the few examples of those excommunicated for adultery being given a serious chance at repentance comes from John Lyman Smith, who received a report from one of his missionaries in Zurich that one Mormon, “had been whoreing with Sophie Wagner & that She was Schwanger [pregnant] from him.”¹²⁵ Smith was perhaps more forgiving than usual due to the pregnancy, and advised that they would be able to be restored once, “they were married according to law or off to Zion & proved themselves truly worthy.”¹²⁶

Accounts before 1852 show far fewer accusations of adultery, and more lenient treatment when they occurred. In America 1836, Abraham Owen Smoot wrote of one woman, “laying

122 William Farrer, “Diary entry, June 20, 1852” Farrer, William vol. 3, 1851-1852, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; William Farrer “May 21, 1854”.

123 Jonathan Stillman Woodbury “August 5, 1855” Woodbury, John Stillman vol. 10, 1855, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

124 John Van Cott “September 27, 1853”, John Van Cott “October 27, 1861” Van Cott, John vol. 3, 1859-1861, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University September 27, 1853 October 27, 1861.

125 John Lyman Smith “January 15, 1862”.

126 Ibid.

on bed with a man that she had previously been accused of committing adultery with”.¹²⁷ After 1852, a woman committing such a crime, especially since it was not the first time, would have surely been cast out. Instead, “Sister Benton confessed her sins, a vote was called on her case and she was restored to fellowship again.”¹²⁸ In Britain 1840, William Clayton also oversaw a case with a couple “intending to live together”.¹²⁹ The two were ultimately excommunicated, but unlike most similar cases it was far from unanimous. The accounts make it clear that if the couple had repented they would have been restored.

Forgiveness was not out of the question for adulterers after 1852, but the punishments for those who avoided excommunication reflect the new concern about the Church’s public image. Moses Thatcher served on the British mission from 1866-1868 and presided over the Cheltenham and Birmingham conferences. On October 29, 1867, Thatcher oversaw the Case of Brother Colden, who had been brought up, “for neglect of duty and going with a woman, not his wife, and for *thus bringing reproach upon the Church*, as well as himself.”¹³⁰ Luckily for Colden by 1867 the church had already relaxed its excommunication policy. In fact, by 1861 the Church seems to have expressed some concern over excommunication practices:

There is no doubt...[that the power to excommunicate]..., in the hands of hasty, inconsiderate men, has often been abused. An excess of zeal in some instances, a desire of showing authority in others and personal pique in others — qualities which have their origin in ignorance — have frequently prompted action upon this point; and the result has been many persons have been excommunicated from the Church, who... might have been brought to see the error of their ways, and repented.¹³¹

127 AbrahamOwen Smoot “Diary entry September 10, 1836” Smoot, A. O. vol. 1, 1836-1846, Courtesy Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

128 Ibid.

129 William Clayton “February 16, 1840”.

130 Moses Thatcher “October 29, 1867” Thatcher, Moses (British Isles) vol. 2, 1867-1868, L. TomPerry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

131 “Instructions on Excommunicating: Members” (1861) *Millennial Star* 23, March 16.

As a result, Thatcher and the others did forgive Brother Colden. However, their mercy required him to make clear to the world that the Church rejected adultery: “he would go and confess to those of the world, who were acquainted with his recent Culpable Conduct, and inform them, that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, did not uphold such conduct in any of its members, but that they condemned it, most positively.”¹³² Though Mormons were not known for a public shaming aspect to their disciplinary proceedings, responding to polygamy finally brought in a strategy that had separated them from their competitors.

Unfortunately for the Church, their efforts at defending their outward reputation mostly failed. The Republican pledge to end polygamy in the territories was maintained nearly as strongly as their pledge to end slavery. 1862, the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act forbade plural marriage in the territories.¹³³ In order to enforce these laws, the Poland Act of 1874 barred Polygamists from serving on Utah juries, or for juries to be made up of more than 50% Mormons. Still finding it difficult to prove whether marriages had occurred, the 1882 Edmunds Act made it illegal to simply cohabit unlawfully. Mormon Polygamy was finally defeated by the 1887 Edmunds Tucker Act, which amongst other things, disincorporated both the Church and the Perpetual Emigration Fund, stripped ‘illegitimate’ children from the ability to inherit, gave the Federal Government the right to appoint Utah Judges, and repealed Utahn Women’s right to vote. In 1890, LDS Church President Wilford Woodruff, who had started as a missionary 54 years previously wading through swamps ‘Without Purse or Scrip’

132 Moses Thatcher “Diary Entry October 29”.

133 For an overview of these laws, see: J. Spencer Fluhman, “Anti-Mormonism and the making of religion in Antebellum America” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 2006), 282-290.

, declared in a revelation that “We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice”.¹³⁴

On the other hand, the Church’s disciplinary efforts seem to have stopped what should have been a mass exodus of membership. Most followers held little love for the doctrine, yet accepted that the Church’s unforgiving rejection of adultery was alleviating their concerns about accusations of sensualism.¹³⁵ Though both the Church and historians alike critique the high rate of excommunications of the 1850s and its impact on mission growth, the reality was that the British mission was already in decline. The British mission had peaked in 1851 before the Polygamy announcement, and that decline was largely the result of emigration. Neither Smith nor Young ever planned for long term missions, with the decline of the British mission largely due to its success in gathering converts. Meanwhile, new missions across Europe and beyond brought the Church new successes. Mormonism’s isolation in Utah saw a severe drop off in U.S. born conversion rates, yet the American Mormon population during the polygamy years, continued to grow by at least one third each decade.¹³⁶ Though one might instinctively expect this population boom to be driven by a polygamy-fuelled birth-rate, the reality was that the Mormon birth-rate was roughly proportional to the U.S. as a whole; therefore, growth cannot be wholly attributed to some unique Mormon virtue of fertility. In fact, even if Mormon growth could be solely attributed to birth-rates, it is still clear that the Church ultimately avoided the 25% membership drop seen in Kirtland after 1837. Despite a few infamous incidents of runaway wives writing exposés of polygamy, Mormonism avoided a wave of runaways. In fact, most Mormon women seem to have

134 Wilford Woodruff, *Official Declaration 1* (1890), Doctrines and Covenants.

135 Jessie L. Embry, “Effects of Polygamy on Mormon Women” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 7, no. 3 (1984), 58.

136 Rodney Stark “The Rise of a New World Faith” *Review of Religious Research*, 26, no. 1 (1984), 21.

accepted polygamy's theological validity. Paula Kelly Harline's own analysis of Mormon women's diaries seems to show that despite a range of struggles with polygamy, Mormon women continued to believe in the Church's teachings.¹³⁷

Conclusion

The Church's unique retention strategy of gathering dictated all other early Mormon retention work. Whenever the Church opened new missions, missionaries had to take on the role of community leaders because there was no prior plan to build self-maintaining local communities. Many strategies developed as conversion tools also had the secondary uses in retention. Whether it is in the home or the pulpit, missionaries were attracting new converts while simultaneously managing the social and spiritual lives of those who had already converted. Even travelling 'Without Purse or Scrip', of which the main purpose was for missionaries to travel quickly and act as living proof that Mormonism was serious about its primitivist theology, had the secondary effect of helping retain the missionaries themselves.

However, communities could not be retained on the side effects of regular proselytising strategies alone. Missionaries were also fund-raisers: as Church funds were reserved to aid migration, missionaries had to ensure that their converts tithed in order to keep the mission alive. Meanwhile, missionaries had to diligently deal out discipline to converts who threatened the strength of the community: whether that is due to a refusal to tithe, anti-social behaviour, or sinful thoughts. Indeed, this role as community judge and prosecutor was essential to retaining converts since apathy and sin could spread to others, and could also disillusion more adamant believers. These fears resulted in missionaries cracking down harshly on adultery in particular, in order to legitimise the recently announced plural marriage

¹³⁷ Harline, *The Polygamous Wives Writing Club*.

doctrine against concerns that the Church may have found a way to masquerade adultery as piety. These concerns also highlight the need for historians to recognise the importance of retention strategies, rather than restrict analysis only up to the point of conversion.

Though it is impossible to truly know whether this was necessary or helpful, harsh discipline, including excommunications, were still a central part of retention work. It is also pressing evidence that it is reasonable to paint the early Mormon Church as a particularly hierarchical one. It is important to note that some disciplinary techniques seem to have been developed by missionaries in the field. However, since missionaries themselves were as closely scrutinised as their own flock, it would be difficult to repaint Church discipline as a grass-roots project. If anything, excommunication proceedings represent the limit on regional development studied in previous chapters. While many missionary strategies were developed in the field, many retention strategies represent the Church's attempt to limit those developments. Furthermore, the silence on the topic of polygamy illuminates widespread anxiousness that permeated even through missionaries who themselves married multiple wives. As further confirmation of the Church's hierarchical nature, it seems less likely that excommunications amputated members who disliked the plural marriage doctrine, and more likely that the spree of excommunications completely silenced all internal criticism of polygamy.

The sociological model of Commitment Mechanisms has proven a useful way to frame these techniques, though it is apparent that historical reality rarely fits neatly within that framework. No single Mormon technique lines up with a single Commitment Mechanism. Instead, most techniques could relate to a variety of mechanisms that do not fit into the broader categories that Kanter proposed. Excommunications for example, could be called both Mortification and Renunciation mechanisms. Gathering was also a Renunciation mechanism, as well as a Communion and Transcendence mechanism. Even tithing, which

adds a biblical dimension to donation, would be most accurately described as a Sacrifice, Investment and Transcendence mechanism. It would more useful to view these mechanisms as “qualities”: effective retention techniques may have a variety of these retention qualities, with an overall retention strategy requiring a spread of these qualities across all the techniques employed.

Conclusion

The purpose of this investigation was to comprehensively understand the development and structure of early Mormon missionary techniques. Specifically, it focused on the first generation of missionaries from 1830 to 1869, since all these missionaries were once converts themselves.¹ Here, the first generation refers to the period where most Mormon adults, and Mormon missionaries in particular, were almost all converts themselves rather than born into the faith. Such an enquiry should aid in understanding how the young Church grew and survived through the tumultuous challenges of the Church's first generation. A comprehensive study required a comparative analysis of Mormonism's most influential missions and how missionaries managed to find success in not just America, but in Britain as well. Furthermore, a proper investigation necessitated understanding the full breadth of missionary roles. This required understanding not just how missionaries converted new Mormons, but retained them as well. These insights were mostly gained via the diaries and autobiographies of missionaries and converts. The aim was to not just identify techniques, but provide a bottom up understanding of Missionary work as it was actually practised, broaden our perception of what we should consider missionary work, and realign the American lens in which we currently view not just Mormonism, but the Second Great Awakening as a whole. The transatlantic approach of this thesis has aided in producing multiple contributions to current scholarship. It reveals unrecognised strategies such as faith healing and excommunication. It also sheds light on scholarly disagreements about the strategic role of the Book of Mormon. Comparing British and American strategies shows that the British mission, rather than the Americans, should be considered the prime context for understanding

¹ This period is clearly longer than a single generation, but is meant to cover both the first generation of American Mormons and the first generation of British Mormons.

nineteenth-century Mormon missionary strategies as a whole. Finally, this thesis shows good reason to reconsider Mormonism's inherent 'Americanness': while legal and cultural differences in Britain led missionaries to alter their techniques, these changes did not fundamentally alter preaching topics or core strategy. Since Mormonism's core appeal seems to have stretched far beyond American borders, the common assumption that Mormonism's construction and attractiveness were driven by unique features of nineteenth-century America is seriously challenged.

Life writings illuminate a vast array of techniques that were grouped into overarching strategies in this thesis. It would be impossible to cover here every technique missionaries used. Therefore, arranging techniques into broad stages provides a framework that can even illuminate the order and purpose of missionary techniques generally, as well as providing a method to compare missions. Stage one involved the methods Mormons used to reach audiences, and in particular, the 'Without Purse or Scrip' doctrine. In America, this travelling was fast and unplanned. Meanwhile, a slower and more methodological approach developed in Britain in response to legal restrictions. Stage two concerned methods for attracting audiences, with diaries revealing that many audiences were attracted by the rumours about the Book of Mormon. Few other techniques for attracting crowds were developed for North America, with more complex tract printing and distribution developed for the British mission. The third stage of techniques refers to anything involved with actual preaching. In North America, these techniques were highly aggressive: focusing on poaching members of other Churches through public debates and critical rhetoric. In Britain, almost all preaching was done in meeting halls, and was done while specifically avoiding confrontation. Preaching in a meeting hall came with legal protection, and British missionaries were unwilling to invite any kind of conflict that would jeopardise it. The fourth stage concerned the time missionaries

took to answer questions and concerns of those that had heard them preach. The main difference between the two regions in this regard was that North American missionaries met in people's homes, while British missionaries answered questions in meeting halls: effectively combining these techniques with preaching. For those that would still not convert, missionaries from both regions would often show potential converts the power of healing through faith or other divine proof, even though this practice was banned by the Church. However, British missionaries offered such healings with far less reservation, likely because the meeting system quickly blurred the lines between Mormon and Mormon sympathiser.

Once someone was baptised, missionaries then moved onto to retention strategies. Based on my reading of the sources, retention techniques did not differ based on geography. This is quite surprising, considering the degree to which region influenced most other techniques. On the other hand, regionally homogeneous techniques are understandable given the top down nature of the Church's retention techniques. Though much of the missionaries' proselytising techniques indirectly maintained converts, techniques which were primarily focused on retention revolved around discipline. Missionaries were not encouraged to experiment with disciplinary policy, especially since they themselves were also subject to it.

Key historical contributions

Though I believe that any effort to build a comprehensive overview of missionary strategies is a worthwhile contribution to Mormon history, some findings also challenge current consensus or illuminate current disagreements. Historians have struggled to understand the role of the Book of Mormon in garnering conversions, with some arguing that it was central

to conversion, and others claiming it was sidelined.² Looking at actual sources produced by missionaries shows that this disagreement stems from the gap between official doctrine and what happened on ground: ultimately, the Book of Mormon played a very specific but limited role in attracting audiences. This also explains the contradictory statements and silences found between convert and missionary life writings. Though missionaries did occasionally use the Book of Mormon in other ways, the overall pattern suggests these were exceptional instances. Ultimately, missionaries purposefully underutilised the Book of Mormon once it had done the work of attracting initial audiences.

The widespread use of faith healing found in this study is also particularly significant. Despite scholarly insistence that missionaries were not using faith healing to garner conversions, diaries show missionaries healing non-Mormons in a bid to confirm conversions that may have otherwise slipped away.³ Such practices that seemingly go against the explicit wishes of the Church demonstrate the importance of bottom up approaches to not just Mormonism, but all religious groups. Summaries of religious groups and their practices usually come from official sources or religious texts, but I would propose that such evidence is of limited use to understanding a religion. Furthermore, we should be wary even when practices do align with theory: there are very real possibilities that official sources may be retroactively justifying practices. To use one example, some scholars have speculated that the first visions narrative shows that “Methodism fundamentally shaped Smith’s early religious

2 John. P Livingstone and Richard E. Bennet, “Remember the New Covenant, Even the Book of Mormon” (D&C 84:57)” in *Go Ye into All The World: The Growth & Development of Mormon Missionary Work*, edited by Reid L. Nielson and Fred E. Woods (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University press, Deseret Book Company, 2012); *Rex Price Jr summarises the book of Mormons used by missionaries thusly in* “The Mormon missionary of the nineteenth century”, (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1991).

3 Steven C. Harper, “Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace”, 14; James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles*, (Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, 2009), 92-93.

wanderings”.⁴ However, since these visions were only published after the establishment of the Church, I suspect that these accounts were written to specifically appeal to the group that formed the bulk of Mormonism’s converts.

In addition, scholars should recognise the strategic value of discipline and excommunication. Excommunications in particular are currently viewed as a measure of a mission’s failure, especially if the excommunication rate is high.⁵ Phillip Taylor and Frederick Buchanan in particular cited high excommunication rates as limiting Mormon growth in Britain without any explanation as to why missionaries may have performed them. Under the assumption that excommunications did not have a strategic value in retaining or reinvigorating communities, they cast excommunications as a backwards step in Mormon growth. However, the statements from the missionaries themselves show that excommunications were often performed with the explicit intention of protecting the wider community. In other words, excommunications were not simply the opposite of conversion, but instead performed in order to maintain or even increase the belief of the remaining converts. This does not mean that all excommunications were wholly justified or to the benefit of the mission. Still, scholars should consider the negative impact that few or even no excommunications might have had before condemning excommunications too harshly.

This study has also demonstrated the importance of a transatlantic approach. Several historians have studied revivalism in a transatlantic frame, but few have studied Mormonism

4 Christopher C. Jones “The Power and Form of Godliness: Methodist Conversion Narratives and Joseph Smith’s First Vision” *Journal of Mormon History*, 37, no. 2 (2011), 88-114.

5 Phillip A.M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of their British Converts in the 19th Century*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), 20; Frederick S. Buchanan, “The Ebb and Flow of Mormonism in Scotland, 1840-1900,” *BYU Studies Quarterly*, 27, no. 2 (1987), 32. F. James Bingley, Jr “Becoming American: The Welsh Mormon Journey” (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 2010), 124.

in the same way.⁶ Such an approach illuminates the role of discipline and excommunication as retention tools. Excommunication has often been discussed in isolation from various regions or the gathering doctrine, with ensuing conclusions that the practice was a blight on mission success. Instead, this study presents a compelling case that the longevity of the Church would have been in jeopardy if less or even no excommunications were dealt out. The British mission was permitted some degree of independence, but these techniques provided the necessary mechanism that limited any real threat of a geographically based breakaway sect that may threaten a Church that permits independent decision making.

This study recognises that most techniques were developed in America and in an American context, that American missionaries were often promoted to the highest positions of power and oversight, and that the disciplinary system often sought to limit the power of local missionaries. Still, the life writings of both British born missionaries and American missionaries who trained in Britain show that they contributed clear and significant developments to Mormon missionary work. The British mission may have taken some strategies from America, but practices such as the widespread use of meeting halls and the avoidance of debates show that the strategies employed in Britain were developed in the British context and designed for British audiences. The fact that many other missions were staffed by British born or trained missionaries seems have led to the broader adoption of British strategies. In other words, the British mission often provides more pertinent context for future studies in the development and structure of other Mormon missions.

⁶ David Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Richard Carwadiene, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790–1865* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978); J. Landes, *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World: The Creation of an Early Modern Community*, (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2015); Annette G. Aubert, *The German Roots of Nineteenth-Century American Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

The transatlantic approach also challenges the claims that Mormonism's foundation and growth was based on America's unique political, cultural and religious environment. In 1989, Nathan Hatch argued that Churches in the early republic as a whole were heavily influenced by the values of the American Revolution: leading to a process where Churches 'democratized'. Hatch claims that in the case of Mormonism, the values of the American Revolution led to its foundation and appeal as anti-elitist. That same year, Mormon historian Marvin S. Hill published *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism*. Like Hatch, Hill also argued that Mormonism's foundation and appeal was based on America's unique qualities: as the title suggest, Hill argued that Mormonism was founded out of a backlash against American democracy and religious pluralism. The problem for both theses, and others like it, is that using unique American features to explain Mormonism's growth and appeal fails to explain the clear fact that Mormonism was appealing outside of America. Indeed, there were strategic differences between British and American missionary techniques. However, this thesis has shown that these differences were either legal, or to do with local tastes for the tone of preaching. In other words, these differences are not significant or fundamental enough to conclude that Mormonism's appeal between the regions was on wholly different bases. Since the Church positioned itself as anti-revivalist, and because Mormonism specifically found appeal amongst ex-revivalists, it is more likely that Mormonism's appeal was part of a response to revivalism, a movement that many scholars recognise as not unique to America.⁷

This study opens multiple avenues for further research. There is a wider trend of studies into the transatlantic nature of many nineteenth-century churches. This study contributes to and

⁷ Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790–1865* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1978), XIV.

encourages further transatlantic studies. The British influence on mission strategy invites exploration of other Mormon missionaries and their strategic development, however there is also a need to examine techniques as a part of the wider story of early Mormon missionary work. Perhaps my research can at least contribute to a study that may one day encompass techniques, theology, convert demographics, as well as key missionaries and Mormon thinkers. Finally, it is highly unlikely that retention work was unique to nineteenth-century Mormon missionaries. Other nineteenth-century missionaries were engaging in retention work, intentional or not. For example, there is certainly an opportunity to study the retaining power of the 'civilising' work that Mormonism's colonial competitors engaged in.

Another important limitation to recognise is that the international thrust of this study is only transatlantic. This thesis was only able to give close attention to the American and British mission. I suspect that a study of other missions, and the Polynesian missions, in particular, would reveal unique techniques of their own. I also suspect from my wider reading that the British missionary model could be expanded into a wider European one. Without these studies it is difficult to include an analysis of the rare instances of female missionaries. Either way, this study is an important launching point for looking at missionary techniques, even if it is not a truly transnational study.

Looking at these techniques as a whole, one cannot help but notice how different these techniques were to those implemented by present day LDS missionaries. Present day missionaries are well organised and funded, even if the missionaries themselves are (proudly) non-salaried. The Book of Mormon is widely printed and distributed by missionaries as well as forming an integral part of missionary lessons. Even target audiences have changed: early Mormons accepted people from varied backgrounds, but their efforts were directed at Protestant Anglo-Christians who were affiliated with a Church or recently disillusioned.

Today's Church has pushed its efforts toward migrant populations sporting other religious heritages. Missionaries in the United States prioritise Catholic Latinos, while Australian missionaries look to Asian migrants and students.⁸ Personal visits can still be found in the now stereotypical door-knocking many missionaries engage in. Even if missionaries are not consciously using faith healing to attract converts, potential converts are still invited to, "Ask the missionaries to offer a healing prayer in your home."⁹ Any strategic purpose to this healing is likely unintended. However, it is strange that these similarities persist, even when modern missionary work is otherwise so different.

Unfortunately for the modern Church, many of these efforts seem to be wasted: despite boasting about the Church's growth rate, evidence shows that modern missionaries are failing to convert or retain their audiences.¹⁰ This does not therefore mean that missionaries should adopt the techniques of the founding generation: as I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, those techniques were developed within particular historical contexts that would not easily translate well today. However, even keeping the currently unsuccessful techniques does not mean the Church's investments are wasted. Missionary work is an honourable and faith affirming service: it encourages young Mormons to make personal sacrifices, it is a massive investment into the Church's future, it encourages the renunciation of non-Mormon life, and orientates missionaries' social lives toward the Church. Even if missions are not

8 Raula Reyes "The Future of the Mormon Church? It's Latino" *NBC News*, <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/future-mormon-church-it-s-latino-n570621> (accessed September, 2017).

9 "Pray for Healing" The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, <https://www.mormon.org/beliefs/pray-for-healing> (accessed September, 2017).

10 Rick Phillips et al., "Mormons in the United States 1990-2008: Socio-demographic Trends and Regional Differences" (Trinity College, 2008), <http://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/files/2011/12/Mormons2008.pdf> (accessed June, 2015).

seeing successful implementations of the first five stages of Mormon missionary work, they are successfully retaining the missionaries themselves.

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FIG.1

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FIG.2

“Mormonism In Utah — The Cave of Despair,” Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper 53.1376 (1882 Feb 04)

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