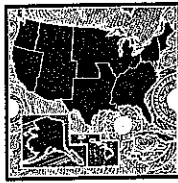

RELIGION BY REGION



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Co-published with the Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the
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RELIGION BY REGION

Religion and Public Life In the Mountain West: *Sacred Landscapes in Transition*

2004

Edited by
Jan Shipps
and
Mark Silk

Published in cooperation with the Leonard E. Greenberg
Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at
Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut



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the common experience of being outsiders that Americans find themselves at home

- 9 Carlos Castañeda, *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Reprint
10. If these sacred sites are located on land that was ceded to various tribes in treaties, Native Americans can bring the issue before the Indian Claims Commission (established in 1946).
- 11 Evelyn Vigil, who served for several years as a reporter and editor for the Los Alamos newspaper, pointed out the importance of this issue. Practically every week newspapers all across Arizona and New Mexico contain stories about the conflicts arising from contested religious sites.
12. The following paragraph is taken from the Web site of the *Sacred Land Film Project*: "The conflict surrounding 17,000 petroglyphs west of Albuquerque, New Mexico, demonstrates that even a national monument is not safe when it comes to suburban development. A developer and the Albuquerque City Council want to build a six-lane highway through the northern portion of the park to give a new housing development access to the city of Albuquerque. At stake is not just a national monument, but also an area of great spiritual significance: 'The petroglyph area is where messages to the spirit world are communicated. We consider each of these petroglyphs to be a record of visions written here of some spiritual being, event, or expression,' says Bill Weahkee of the Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos, Inc."
13. The *High Country News* is published by the High Country Foundation, a non-profit media organization whose mission is to inform and inspire people to act on behalf of the West's land, air, water, and inhabitants. It works "to create what Wallace Stegner called a society to match the scenery."
- 14 Both incidents are described in Kathleen Egan Chamberlain's, "Competition for the Native American Soul: The Search for Religious Freedom in Twentieth Century New Mexico," in Ferenc M. Szasz and Richard W. Eutalian eds, *Religion in Modern New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 81-100.
15. For a useful discussion of the "Indian Question" in one of the states in this sub-region, see Chamberlain, *Ibid*.
- 16 These persons are hard to trace historically because it was illegal for them to practice their faith, causing them to keep their Jewish heritage hidden. See Henry Tobias, *A History of the Jews in New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990)
- 17 A full description of this case can be found in Janice E. Schuetz, "A Rhetorical Approach to Protestant Evangelism in Twentieth-Century New Mexico," in Szasz and Eutalian, *Religion in Modern New Mexico*, 135-139.
- 18 Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Arizona and New Mexico, 1530-1888*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967; San Francisco: The History Co., 1889), 534.
- 19 Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991), 283.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MORMON CORRIDOR: UTAH AND IDAHO

Kathleen Flake¹

Utah and Idaho form the core of the Mormon Corridor. Named by cultural geographer Donald Meinig in 1955, the region's strong religious ethos has been experienced by all who have lived in the Mountain West since members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Latter-day Saints or Mormons) occupied the Great Basin in 1847.² Arriving early and colonizing methodically, the Latter-day Saints and their church have maintained an extraordinarily influential presence throughout the region for more than 150 years. Although North American Religion Atlas (NARA) data, derived from reports by religious institutions themselves, show that the Mormons constitute only 1.5 percent of the population nationally, descendants of the Mormon pioneers and their converts constitute 14 percent of the population in the Mountain West, nine times the national average. Within Idaho and Utah, that percentage doubles and quadruples respectively.

Mormon dominance must also be measured in terms of the LDS Church's economic and political influence. In the nineteenth century, the church created a communal economy and political theocracy that, notwithstanding modernization, has left much of the land as well as the commercial and political institutions of this sub-region of the Mountain West under direct or indirect Mormon control. Contrary to the experience of founding religions in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, whose social authority and political power were diluted by religious pluralism, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has retained both its demographic and cultural dominance in Utah and southern Idaho.

This chapter considers three dimensions of the relation of religion to public life in the Mountain West. The first dimension is suggested by statistics: a singular lack of diversity and a single dominant religious institution have created a de facto religious establishment. The second dimension has to do with the kind of

religion that dominates the region. Mormons are not only intensely self-identified with their church today, but its history and the nature of their faith make them and their church very public actors in all aspects of regional politics and culture.

If Mormonism is very public, however, it is also very private. Consequently, as a belief system, Mormonism gives its adherents a totality of experience and, in exchange, elicits a type of commitment that can isolate them and communicate disrespect to others. In fairness, it should be remembered that America's other religions contributed to Mormon standoffishness by an extended history of attacks upon Mormonism, a uniquely violent exception to the general rule of American religious tolerance. These factors—demographics, theology, and history—combine to make the Great Basin a site of considerable religious tension that often gets played out in the public domain.³

The Numbers

The Mormons were the first Europeans to settle in the Great Basin. They came by the thousands and settled in organized communities, not as individual homesteaders. Non-Mormons came as well, but in significant numbers only after 1869, when the driving of a golden spike at Promontory, Utah, signaled completion of the transcontinental railroad. Over the next 15 years, the Mormons' share of the population dropped from 98 to 63 percent. It appears to have settled there.⁴ According to NARA, Latter-day Saints make up 66 percent of Utah's population. Catholics come next with 4 percent. All other religious groups each constitute less than 1 percent of the population. Only the religiously unaffiliated, with 23.5 percent, can claim double-digit representation.

The nature of religion in the Great Basin challenges the category "religiously unaffiliated" as generally applied by NARA. Many of the unaffiliated may be lapsed Mormons who do not worship with "the Saints" but continue to be motivated by the church's worldview or have some loyalty to its traditions. In Utah and Idaho's historically Mormon towns, disinterest in organized religion can mask a visceral attachment to several generations of pioneers and missionaries and an inheritance of their habits, if not their devotion. When, for example, 47 percent of the 921 residents of Utah's Daggett County claim to be religiously unaffiliated, but all the others espouse Mormonism, diversity may not run very deep. Mormonism's uncontested dominance over the region does not rely on such subtleties, however. In 26 of Utah's 29 counties, Mormons constitute a raw majority of the general population. In 10 of those counties, the Mormon majority is 80 percent or higher.

Idaho's demographics show more diversity than Utah's, but still are marked by Mormonism. The state is comprised of three geographic and cultural sections, in terms of its non-indigenous populations.⁵ Its agricultural land to the south is an

extension of the Great Basin and, especially in the southeast, was colonized in the 1870s at the direction of Brigham Young. These counties have a robust Mormon population, constituting between 35 and 92 percent of the area's residents and retain a social and cultural orientation to Salt Lake City. Idaho's southwestern counties gravitate naturally to its capital city, Boise, and are home to the state's major corporate interests, as well as federal military and regulatory agencies. Depending upon how the counties are apportioned between these two areas, Mormon concentration in southwest Idaho averages 15 percent, compared to 61 percent in the southeast.⁶

Idaho's northern panhandle is divided from the south by Hell's Canyon, the deepest gorge in North America. This rugged terrain was settled in the 1860s by miners, but fur traders and Jesuits had preceded them by 20 years. The latter established Catholicism among the Coeur d'Alenes. Their Cataldo Mission, built in 1853, was the first church in Idaho and remains today the state's oldest building. Many of the miners who later came into the region were of Irish descent, adding to early predominance of Catholicism in the north. Such cultural divisions between Idaho's north and south were maintained by Hell's Canyon, which inhibited the flow of commerce and traffic until the late twentieth century and even today requires a detour outside the state's boundaries when traversing the state. Over time, northern Idaho's natural tie with the terrain and peoples to its west has caused a greater identity with them than with Idahoans to the south.

Like their Pacific Coast neighbors, the panhandle counties have a high number of religiously unaffiliated; in some cases higher than Oregon's 65 and Washington's 62 percent averages. Consequently, the north displays today greater religious diversity than the south. In most counties, the population is fairly evenly balanced among Catholics, Mormons, evangelicals, and the historic mainline Protestants, with a small representation of non-Christian adherents. For instance, of the 37 percent of Latah County's residents who are religious, 8 percent are Catholic; 8 percent are Mormon; 4 percent are Holiness or Pentecostal; 4 percent are Lutheran; 3 percent are conservative Christians; 2 percent are Baptist; 2 percent are Methodist; 2 percent are Presbyterian; 2 percent are Muslim; and the remainder (at less than 1 percent each) are Episcopalian, Christian Church (Disciples), mainline liberal Christians, Jews, and adherents of Eastern religions. In a few areas, however, Catholics have retained their historic majority, such as in Idaho County, where they constitute almost half of all religious adherents and 18 percent of the population at large.

Finally, Northern Idaho's geographic isolation appears to have encouraged religious independence as well. The state is famous for providing cover for quasi-religious movements seeking absolute freedom from the law. Nearly a quarter of the religious adherents in Adams and Bonner Counties are conservative

Christians In addition, radical groups like the Nazi-inspired Church of Jesus Christ Christian and World Aryan Congress at Hayden Lake have been drawn to the remoteness of Idaho's northern counties. The high incidence of unaffiliated in the northern counties, coupled with the great variety of churches, gives no religious group an identifiably dominant role in local public life. As a result, statewide, then, the Mormons remain the largest proportion of Idaho's population with 24 percent, while Catholics follow at 10 percent. This, of course, has political ramifications.

In terms of its capacity to mobilize that portion of the population with religious commitments in the Utah-Idaho sub-region, the LDS Church can assume that more than 80 percent of Utah's and almost 50 percent of Idaho's religious adherents identify with Mormonism at some level. Only three of Utah's 29 counties are less than 70 percent Mormon; four are 99.5 percent or higher.⁷ Even in Utah's more metropolitan areas, the church claims 80 percent of the total number of religious adherents. Thus, contrary to the general rule, Utah's population centers are not the most secular or the most religiously diverse.

In Salt Lake City, site of the state's capital and also LDS Church headquarters, the population within the metropolitan boundaries is about evenly divided between Mormon and non-Mormon. But the surrounding suburbs in Salt Lake County are mostly Mormon. Only 30 percent of the county's population claims to be unaffiliated, itself an extraordinary figure for a metropolitan area of approximately 900,000 people. It is also remarkably homogeneous: Mormons constitute 80 percent of all the county's adherents; the remaining 20 percent is split among many faith communities that achieve a measure of numerical significance only when grouped in broad historical or theological categories: Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians together constitute 9.2 percent; Protestants 5.8; Eastern religions 1.7; Jews .7; and Muslims .6 percent. No single Protestant church has numbers in excess of 1 percent in Salt Lake City or even statewide.

Diversity Not

If the amount of religion in the Mormon Corridor is the first conclusion drawn from the NARA, the second is its homogeneity. Considering that the nation is famous for its religious diversity, the nearly absurd lack of such diversity in Utah's makeup is revealed by the kind of questions provoked by the NARA data. Why, for instance, are only (not "as many as") 59 percent of Grand County's religious adherents Latter-day Saints? The answer appears to lie in a combination of radical terrain and Native American resistance that stymied Mormon settlement intentions until the late 1870s. In addition, mining became the area's chief industry at a time when church authorities discouraged it among members.

Not until 1937 did the area achieve sufficient population to be granted status as a separate county. Today, the steep canyons of the Colorado River that served to hide Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid are national parks and nationally famous recreational venues, including the city of Moab, mecca to four-wheel drive enthusiasts. Grand County's residents, while still 3 percent above the regional average of 48 percent, are only half as religious as their fellow Utahns. Next to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Baptists claim the most members with 20 percent of the county's religious adherents; all other Protestants combined come in third, with 11 percent; with Catholics close behind, at 10 percent.

The other two Utah counties where less than 70 percent of religious adherents are Mormon tell a similar story. Summit County, once famous for its Park City silver mines, is today a skiers' paradise with its own brewery. Nevertheless, as a gateway from the east through the Wasatch Mountains to the Salt Lake Valley, the region retains a Mormon ethos. Only 40 percent of its residents are not unaffiliated or uncounted; 62 percent of all church adherents are Latter-day Saints. With 67 percent Mormon affiliation, Carbon County, too, has its history in the mining industry and, like Summit, 18 percent of its religious affiliates are Catholic. Federal geologist Marcus E. Jones was right in 1890 when he reported to the U.S. Treasurer: "Had ores not been easily smelted, Utah would still be Mormon only."⁸

In Idaho, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints constitute 70 percent or more of adherents in 14 of 44 counties and between 40 and 65 percent of another five counties. These counties are in the more densely populated southern end of Idaho, and suggest greater political leverage than the numbers alone communicate. For example, in Ada County, home of Boise, the state capital (one of the state's three counties with a population greater than 100,000), 32 percent of the religious adherents are Latter-day Saints. Catholics are the second most numerous, with 26 percent; and conservative Protestants are third, at 11 percent. In Canyon County, after Ada the state's second most populous county, 33 percent of the religious adherents are Latter-day Saints.⁹

Latter-day Saint adherents constitute the majority of all adherents in the state's three counties with populations between 50,000 and 100,000. In Bannock and Bonneville counties, of all adherents they are 75 and 70 percent respectively. In Bonneville, the Saints outnumber all other adherent categories combined, including the unaffiliated or uncounted. In Twin Falls County, Latter-day Saints constitute 38 percent of adherents; Catholics follow at 17 percent; and Holiness/Wesleyan, combined with Pentecostals, constitute 10 percent. Finally, in three of the seven counties with cities with populations between 20,000 and 50,000, Latter-day Saints have majorities ranging from 66 to 99 percent.

This means that Mormon dominance in the Great Basin is so disproportionately high that it is difficult to give an account of other religions in an essay devoted to religion's public role. In Utah County, for example, home of Brigham Young University and a population of approximately 370,000, of whom 88 percent are Mormon, what effect can the roughly 370 Baptist or even 3,700 Catholic residents have on local government? How does their voice register in school board meetings or on local tax initiatives? Given, however, the affinity of Mormons, Baptists, and Catholics on certain social questions, such as same-sex unions and abortion, one might as easily worry about the 1,100 unaffiliated who constitute only 9 percent of the population.

The political consequences of Mormon dominance are most easily measured on the national and state level, however. In terms of political office, all the members of Utah's Congressional delegation except one are both Mormon and Republican. The lone Democrat is not an active member of the LDS Church, but his constituents regard him as a "cultural Mormon." The state has not had a non-Mormon governor since 1957. Presently, four of five justices of the state supreme court and 90 percent of its legislature are Latter-day Saints. While each of these public servants may be as independent-minded as any other religious person, it remains a fact that there are few such "other religious persons" among Utah's political leaders. Even if the state's officialdom self-consciously seeks independence from their religious ideology while on the job, the point is that Utah's homogeneity requires such self-consciousness because the social system itself lacks diversity of religious perspective.

The situation in Idaho likewise reflects the state's religious demographics. The state-published *Blue Book for 2001-2002* reveals that 30 percent of Idaho's Senate and 34 percent of its House were then Latter-day Saints, slightly higher than the church's 24 percent portion of the state's population. At the national level, Latter-day Saints occupy half of the state's two Senate and two House seats. The concentration of the Mormon population in the state's Second Congressional District (Southeastern Idaho) almost guarantees that at least one House seat will be held by a member of the LDS Church.¹⁰

Not only its numerical strength, but also its stance on the issues, appear to make Mormon political activity obvious to others in this Mountain West sub-region. In an interview for this chapter, an expert in Idaho politics said that he believed he could tell which legislators are Latter-day Saints by the conservative nature of their voting records. Regardless of the accuracy of his assumption, it appears to be widely shared. According to Gregory Hahn's report in the *Idaho Statesman* of June 19, 2000, the loss of Pocatello, "one of the few Idaho cities to offer genuine two-party debates," to the Republicans is credited in part to the rising numbers of Latter-day Saints in Bannock County.

Utah is so famously and conservatively homogeneous that neither party puts much effort into presidential campaigning there, one party believing it does no good and the other confident it is not necessary.

Research data confirm that the LDS Church is the most single-party religious institution in the nation. The American Religious Identification Study (ARIS) provides information about the way people in the United States identify themselves religiously and politically. ARIS data for 2001 reveal that, while the Latter-day Saints' 55 percent affiliation with the Republican Party is equal to that of evangelical fundamentalists, fewer Mormons deem themselves either independents or members of some party other than the two major parties.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, the LDS Church became concerned about the lopsided political situation in the Mormon culture region. Marlin K. Jensen, a high-ranking church official, was assigned to speak publicly on the proposition that one can be a Democrat and a good Mormon. As reported in an interview with the *Salt Lake Tribune* on April 3, 1998, he said, "We are [concerned] locally and I think there is a feeling that even nationally as a church, it's not in our best interest to be known as a one-party church. The national fortunes of the parties ebb and flow." Since then, during election season, letters from church headquarters not only encourage local congregations to be politically active, but also newly emphasize the importance of a two-party system.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is, however, a presence in politics not only indirectly through its members but also directly through its leadership. Each year in Utah, representatives of the state legislature meet formally with high-ranking church officials who are assigned to monitor political issues. "Before every general session, leadership from both parties are invited down to meet with the church's Special Affairs Committee," Utah's speaker of the House told a *Salt Lake Tribune* reporter on January 6, 2002. He added, "We've done that for as long as I've been up here."

Utah's congressional delegation is no less responsive. A prime example is the church's opposition in the early 1980s to a federal proposal to place an intercontinental missile system in Beaver County, Utah. The church's First Presidency issued a formal statement that the MX missiles were not welcome in the state, causing a reversal in position by Utah's then-powerful Senator Jake Garn and contributing materially to the demise of the project. Evidently, the thought of 200 ballistic missiles circulating on a track among 4,200 shelters did not comport with the church's concept of Zion.

More commonly, the LDS Church uses its political influence to protect its ecclesiastical programs, economic interests, and moral order. This includes a wide variety of regulatory issues, from the regulation of water rights locally to national tax policy. Moreover, the extent of the church's economic holdings and,

in Utah, its proprietary sense that the sub-region is its homeland, broaden the church's political interests to include a surprising range of otherwise secular issues, even ballistic missiles. The church attracts most attention, however, for its influence on issues it deems moral, such as alcohol consumption, women's rights, and same-sex unions.

Mormons abstain strictly from alcohol and Utah regulates its sale just as strictly. The causative relationship between these two facts is no secret. On February 3, 2003, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, church authorities and the Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (DABC) commissioners met to discuss impending changes to the state's liquor laws. In response to a federal court's rejection of Utah's broad restraints on liquor advertising, including prescriptions against asking a customer if he or she wanted a drink or a wine list, local regulators had proposed changes to other elements of the law as well.

The new regulations allowed Utah's drinkers to have two glasses in front of them at dinner and to take an unfinished bottle home. They could also be offered flights of wine, as long they did not exceed five ounces. Beer, however, remained a diluted 3.2 percent and, while more restaurants would have access to liquor licenses (though at a higher price), bars were still required to function as private clubs and were newly required to serve food on the premises. To the predominately Mormon DABC, the new rules were "a product of seeking public comment." To restaurant owners who did not perceive themselves to be a part of the public whose "comments" mattered, the new laws "reflect the culture of the state. And the culture of this state is a dominant religion."

As might be expected, the less dominant position of the church in Idaho has affected the application of Latter-day Saint mores onto the broader population. Specifically, while Utah has repeatedly rejected a state lottery, gambling was legalized in 1989 in Idaho, but only after LDS Church leaders made a determined effort in opposition. In an unusual display of ecclesiastical force, a member of the church's ruling council who was also a former Utah Supreme Court justice was dispatched to Idaho to speak publicly against the state's lottery initiative with a sermon on the "Evils of Gambling." In response to his exhortation, local ecclesiastical leaders also spoke against the measure, instructing the people in their wards (congregations) to vote against the lottery and asking them to encourage their neighbors to do the same. Their efforts failed, however, suggesting that on issues where individual conscience is concerned, the advice of LDS leadership may have less impact than is sometimes supposed. Nevertheless, both Utah's religiously identifiable regulatory law and Idaho's resistance to it signify not only that religion matters in the Great Basin, but also that "a" specific religion matters. Thus, the nature of Mormonism is as important as its numbers are to understanding the effect of religion on public life in the Great Basin.

The Nature of the Great Basin's Religions: Minority and Majority

In theological terms, Latter-day Saints have historically understood God as essentially related to the world and themselves as employed in the work of preparing the world for the millennial reign when the heavenly and earthly kingdoms of God would be joined. Until then, the two spheres—the earthly temporal and the heavenly spiritual—would work in concert to accomplish this goal. Believers generally preferred the metaphor of kingdom to that of ecclesia. It conveyed the scope of their project to live in a place, not just within an assembly, governed by the law of God and possessing the power to bind or give efficacy to their earthly works and associations in the heavenly kingdom as well.¹¹ Not unlike the traditional Catholic notion of the "communion of Saints," the Latter-day Saints believed that the earthly church participated in both eternal and temporal worlds. Three principles were derived from this fusion of the ideal and the real:

- First, there was properly no distinction between the temporal and spiritual government of the Latter-day Saints.
- Second, temporal property and labor were to be dedicated to spiritual purposes, including the good of the collective body of Saints and the building up of the Kingdom of God on the earth.
- Third, covenants made between individuals and consecrated by church ordinance were not temporal, but eternal.

The Mormons left U.S. territorial boundaries because the extremity of the differences between them and Protestant America made coexistence impossible. Successive conflicts with their neighbors in New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois convinced the Saints that "liberty in a solitary place and in a desert is far more preferable than martyrdom in these pious states."¹² The Great Basin provided the desired solitude. By the 1860s, thanks to geographical distance and the nation's preoccupation with the southern insurrection, the Latter-day Saints had successfully constructed political, economic, and familial structures in the West that actualized their highest theology and governed their everyday lives.

The nineteenth-century Mormon settlements in the Mountain West region constituted a complex, unified, and fully developed society established outside of and in contrast to the rest of antebellum America. It consisted of a communal economic system that conscientiously rejected capitalism; a political system that mirrored the Mormon ecclesiastical structure; and a polygamous family system. These interlocking systems that brought all of life under the aegis of the church were displayed to the outside world when, in making the first of several failed attempts for statehood in 1849, the Mormons proposed a government comprised exclusively of the ranking ecclesiastical officers of their church.

The Mormons' economic unity was, like their political unity, seen as an

attempt to unlawfully control individual freedom, especially that of non-Mormons. When the discovery of local mineral deposits and the completion of the intercontinental railroad threatened to make the Mormons dependent on eastern manufactured goods and a cash economy, Mormon leadership initiated a cooperative movement that encouraged self sufficiency through home industry and discouraged Mormons from trading with the Gentiles, as all non-Mormons were called. Concerns about Mormon exclusionary and anti-capitalist efforts were, however, outweighed by fear of the economic might of the church itself. As early as the Morrill Act of 1862, the opening salvo in anti-polygamy legislation, Congress attempted to limit the amount of real estate the church could hold to \$50,000, requiring forfeiture of excess amounts. The explicit goal was preventing the accumulation of wealth by "theocratic institutions inconsistent with our forms of government"¹³

Although each of these categories of difference has changed sufficiently to permit the inclusion of Mormonism into America's religious body politic, the ideological biases of each remain in the twenty-first century Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and help explain many of its public choices, as well as the reaction of its neighbors.

The political dimension of Mormonism—its conflation of the temporal and the eternal—has always been a source of concern for its fellow citizens. In Missouri, fears of Mormon cohesive voting power were a precipitating factor in the church's violent expulsion from that state. Antagonism to the Mormon vote was not based solely in its homogeneity; it was grounded also in America's fundamental objection to a priestly organization that culminates in a prophet-president. Even though the church's priesthood was "of all believers," it was a much more sacramental system than that embraced by Protestantism and, more problematically, was led by one who claimed to speak for God.

As such, Mormonism's ecclesiastical order was believed to inhibit the free exercise of conscience and, thus, undermine the morality necessary to sustain democracy. To Protestants, Mormonism was a "Romanish" or "popish" threat to republican government. To all of America, Mormonism's belief in modern revelation and new scripture made Latter-day Saints antinomian to a rare degree, even in a nation characterized by its religious enthusiasm.

More to the point, the Latter-day Saints' devotion to a law-giving prophet gave them the potential to be a law unto themselves. Fears of theocracy were exacerbated by the territory's petition for statehood that conflated political and ecclesiastical office. Church leaders at all levels were not only pastors of flocks, but also priestly administrators of an earthly kingdom. Thus, the Mormon Zion was not merely a religious ideal, but a completely realized city-state laying

between the Great Plains and the California gold fields—a full-blown theocracy in the heart of a would-be enlightened republic.

As strange as it sounds today, Utah's religious establishment was permissible under nineteenth-century constitutional law that had not yet imposed First Amendment restraints on the states. Only the federal government was prohibited from establishing a religion. Unfortunately for Latter-day Saints, however, their legal argument was overtaken by a limitation of states rights by civil war and a judicially enforced ideology of national identity and reform. In the final two decades of the nineteenth century, the church with the soul of a nation and the nation with the soul of a church negotiated which parts of the Mormon Kingdom had to be reconfigured in order for Great Basin residents to join the United States. Eventually, a compromise between Mormons and the nation required the subordination of church marital law to federal law. But much of the church's ideological framework and actual power over Great Basin politics and economics, as well as Mormon social cohesion in the form of family tribalism, was left intact.

Renunciation of polygamy was the chief price the church paid for its acceptance within the nation's religious polity. One cannot, today, be polygamous and a member of the LDS Church; excommunication is immediate for those who try. Indeed, for contemporary Mormons, the practice is so unacceptable that inquiries concerning it are often experienced as one of those "have you stopped beating your wife" questions, asked with an apparent resistance to any answer but what is already assumed. For example, some news analysis in the Elizabeth Smart kidnapping sought to explain her trance-like response to her polygamous captors in terms of the LDS Church former practices. For Latter-day Saints, such explanations echoed old prejudices about the morality of Mormon marriage and charges of an evil mesmerism to explain its practice.

If continuity exists between earlier and contemporary church marriage practice, it is found in the continuing Mormon conviction that marriage has salvific potential and functions to create familial bonds of eternal significance. Such ideology underlies the LDS Church's public fight against recent initiatives to broaden the definition of marriage to include same-sex unions. The irony of the LDS Church's battle to preserve a particular model of marriage at the expense of another is too obvious not to reveal the extent of contemporary Mormonism's alienation from its past. Indeed, as the current church president tells it:

People mistakenly assume that this Church has something to do with that [contemporary polygamy]. It has nothing whatever to do with it. It has had nothing to do with it for a very long time. It's outside the realm of our responsibility. These people are not members.¹⁴

It can also be argued, however, that "plural marriage," as the Latter-day

Saints denominated their family system, remains a dimension of their sacred cosmology and supports their deeply felt sense of difference from the broader culture. But neither of these residuals motivate the church to defend polygamy or prevent the church from applying its own theologically based morality to justify intervention in present legislative debates about lawful forms of marriage and sexual conduct. Idaho and Utah were the only states in the Mountain West region with anti-sodomy statutes before the Supreme Court struck down those laws in June 2003.

The LDS theology of marriage can also drive a wedge between Mormons and their neighbors. A news poll published June 27, 2002 by the *Logan Herald Journal*, a newspaper serving a university population not far from the Idaho border, found that "70 percent of church members would object to their children marrying outside of the faith." Only 8 percent of all others polled felt this way. Obviously, since opposition to marriage outside the faith dramatically affects their social relations, this is one of the factors making Mormons appear exclusive.

Just as problematic in a pluralistic culture is the amount of time Latter-day Saints devote to their church callings. On the congregational and diocesan level, church positions are all filled by laity, including positions that paid clergy fill in other churches. Coupled with a three-hour Sunday meeting schedule and temple attendance requirements, these commitments remove Mormons from the ordinary stream of non-Mormon social activity. For those who do not understand the theological basis for these phenomena, Mormons appear at best only superficially involved with those not of their faith and, at worst, elitist by a maddeningly self-referential standard of what is worthy.

Politically, the story is equally complicated. On one hand, the LDS Church has clearly removed all formal ties between ecclesiastical and political office. As the sociologist Thomas O'Dea observed many years ago, the fact that political trends in Utah are largely consistent with the nation as a whole indicates that the church does not absolutely control politics in the Great Basin. "In fact," O'Dea said, "while exerting political influence, the church leadership often points with pride to the fact that it does not control the vote, an interesting reaction conditioned by generations of gentile resentment and suspicion on this score."¹⁵ Years of faith-based political battles have sensitized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to its critics' claims and, as O'Dea noted, made it useful for the church to lose on occasion. Nevertheless, there are theological limits to how far the LDS leadership is willing to go in remaining politically neutral.

In particular, though the theocratic apparatus has been thoroughly dismantled, accepting the church's prophet-president's jurisdiction over temporal and spiritual matters remains a part of the Mormon faith. While some members may resent church direction in political matters deemed moral and may exercise their

agency to disagree with a given political position of the church's leadership, public dissenters are remarkably few. To disagree publicly becomes an issue of faith and can result in separation from the body of the church. Indeed, tension between hierarchically defined positions and contrary ones espoused by individual Mormons is a significant part of the public expression of religion in the Great Basin, most especially in Utah's Salt Lake County. Nationally, this tension has also been apparent—most recently in the church's campaign against same-sex unions and, most effectively, in its campaign against the ERA.¹⁶

Thus, while the LDS Church takes great pains not to endorse candidates or engage in party politics, it does not hesitate to take a position on political issues it deems threatening to its worldview. When it does act politically on specific local initiatives—alcohol and gambling, for example—the church offends keen sensibilities about church-state separation, if only because the church is so often determinative of the outcome. A local brewer voiced his displeasure with Utah's new liquor laws by marketing a new label, "First Amendment Lager," with the slogan "Taxation without Representation is Utah."

Finally, although the economic commonwealth that was the Utah Territory became a capitalist market with statehood, the idea that the hierarchically organized church acts on behalf of its members temporally, not just spiritually, remains a part of Mormonism's basic ideology. In his history of Mormonism's nineteenth-century, *Great Basin Kingdom*, Leonard Arrington said it best:

The church's prime obligation was to forward the building of the Kingdom, and that meant it had positive functions to perform in increasing the production of goods and services. In line with this basic orientation, church funds were used to promote many types of new enterprises, ecclesiastical officials regulated many phases of economic activity.¹⁷

Today, as well, church leadership continues to actively maintain its traditional property interests, developing commercial business opportunities in service to "the building of the Kingdom."

Because information about the church's financial holdings is not public, it is impossible to know with certainty the extent of the church's economic power in the Mountain West. Those who have attempted to quantify it are forced to generalize. In the 1980s, one study pointed to church ownership of "the 13 radio and TV stations, the four insurance companies, the hotel, the newspaper, the big farms the real estate companies (which control four square blocks of prime real estate in the center of Salt Lake City), the clothing mills, the book company, all the schools, the welfare farms and industries, the big department store downtown, [and] the investment portfolio."¹⁸

Since this list was compiled, both the church and its host economy have

boomed. The *Salt Lake Tribune* estimated the church's assets as "exceeding \$20 billion" in a December 9, 2001 news story. Even if conservative estimates of church assets, such as that by the *Economist* in February 2002, of \$6 billion are closer to the truth, the church's total income from tithes and investments, combined with the value of its tangible property, make it comparable to the region's largest corporations in income generation and numbers of employees. Thus, like its numbers in the Mormon Corridor, the church's economic power also is growing. Inexorably, these developments contribute to the church's political position.

In sum, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' dominating presence in the Great Basin is naturally part of the region's history. But it is equally a function of the church's theology of time and place. The church's *raison d'être* is to sanctify the temporal and prepare it to meet the eternal in time, even a second time when Christ comes again. This requires an assertive engagement in temporal affairs that will build God's kingdom on earth and throughout the earth. The internationalization of the church has not, however, diminished Mormon attachment to the region as its heartland. America's Great Basin remains the Mormons' "right place," as Brigham Young pronounced it upon his arrival in the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

Mormons consider it their rightful place as well. Having figured out how to sustain life in its deserts, they appear intent on hanging on to the fruits of their sacrifice. Moreover, they appear intent on retaining their historic cultural dominance over the sub-region, keeping it the concrete expression of their world view and a haven for the deployment of their ecclesiastical mission throughout the world. For the Mormons, the Mormon Corridor is a homeland, not just the site of church headquarters. Its pioneer temples and cemeteries constitute sacred space and the church will expend every effort to preserve it as such. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the recent crisis over what to do with a one-block segment of Salt Lake City's Main Street.

In 1998, city administrators and the LDS Church presidency announced that the portion of Main Street that runs between Mormonism's Temple Square and church headquarters would be sold to the church for \$8.1 million. Consistent with the city's "Second Century Plan," the church planned to use the property for a park-like plaza that would join the two tourist centers that attract 9 million visitors each year. While pedestrians would have access through the plaza, control was ceded to the church, allowing it to forbid smoking, sunbathing, bicycling, obscene or vulgar speech, dress, or conduct, and preaching or proselytizing it did not endorse.

To its critics, the plan was a conspiratorial land grab by a church that had run roughshod over local interests to enhance its already too-public presence and to silence dissent in the area adjacent to its religious landmarks. Supporters respond-

ed that the sale was merely the last piece of a 40-year master plan to revitalize downtown, the result of a long public process initiated by civic leaders that would inure to the city's financial benefit. Moreover, the church itself argued, the restrictions on public liberty were consistent with traditional principles of private ownership, as well as dictated by the existing religious nature of the two church properties joined by the new plaza.

The traditional parties stepped forward to test the arrangement. With help from the ACLU, the First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City (which objected to provisions limiting proselytizing to Mormons), Utahans for Fairness (who protested the church's stand on gay rights), and the Utah chapter of NOW (who had fought church politics in the ERA campaign) joined to ask the federal courts to nullify the contract's restraints on use and speech. After losing in federal district court, an appellate court found that the contract's retention of an easement for pedestrian use created public, not sacred space.

Therefore, it was held that plaza restraints on speech had to pass constitutional muster. On October 10, 2002, the Rev. Tom Goldsmith of the First Unitarian Church responded to his victory by telling the *Deseret News* that the lawsuit "had to happen . . . It's about time we leveled the playing field in hearing a diversity of speech and opinion." Sports metaphors do not do justice to the level of conflict galvanized by the plaza dispute, nor the local powers brought to bear on its solution.

As the furor over the sale appeared to gather public support, the church distributed to the media and to Salt Lake's business, civic, and religious leaders a sophisticated brochure explaining its legal position. A portion of the brochure listed a few recent financial contributions by the church to the city's infrastructure, including land for the city's convention center and concert hall, leased from the church for \$1 per year; "sustaining support" for Utah's symphony, ballet, and opera; significant cash and labor donated for construction and restoration of local Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Presbyterian churches; and \$800,000 for a municipal mass transit study. In addition, the church noted that it had given \$5 million to the Salt Lake Olympic Committee and provided a block of downtown real estate for the Olympic Medals Plaza.

Though not complete, or even a sufficient measure for the purpose of generalizing about the church's domain, this brochure provided a rare glimpse of the LDS Church's public role in the state's capital city. It was intended, no doubt, to assure the local population that the church was a good, even benevolent, corporate citizen that could be trusted to manage the plaza in the city's best interest. But the list evidenced also the church's controlling position within the community and even constituted a reminder that Salt Lake's citizens were beholden to the church for much of what made their city work. The brochure was by no means a threat, but it was a display of force.

In the end, Rev. Goldsmith's victory was short-lived. While the matter was on appeal to the Supreme Court, tension on the plaza escalated. Two weeks after the Court of Appeals restored "diversity of speech and opinion," the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported in "Day of Heckling on Plaza" that one protestor shouted to a group of 12-year-old Mormon girls: "I'd rather be a homosexual than fornicate with you." In December, a local TV station showed evangelical missionaries passing out anti-Mormon literature and shouting through bullhorns at wedding parties posing on Temple Square. Photos in the January papers showed demonstrators bearing placards with anti-Mormon slogans, such as "Jesus Saves; Joseph [Smith] Enslaves."

Such reports caused even the mayor, a former ACLU attorney and avowed secularist, to reverse course. He abandoned a plan to try to impose constitutional limits on church regulation of the space and agreed to sell the easement itself to the church. On June 23, 2003, the same day as the Supreme Court declined to hear the church's appeal, Salt Lake's City Council approved the mayor's plan. In exchange for the easement, the city received church-owned land for a new community center as well as money to build it from several people affiliated with the church.

The Associated Press report of that same date, headlined "Free Speech, Religion Collide on SLC Plaza," concluded that "the dispute widened a chasm that exists between the city's dominant Mormon population, and non-Mormons who complain of being forced to live by the church's precepts." Hearing such complaints, non-residents tended to agree with a 2002 *Economist* reporter who said, "these charges are exaggerated. The alcohol laws [for example] are annoying rather than oppressive." And, it is true that the amount of regulation and even the objects of regulation in Utah have much in common with other areas of the country. The South's conservative Protestantism has strictly regulated alcohol sales and consumption for years. Kentucky still has more dry counties than wet ones.

But the experience of public religion in the Great Basin is greater than the sum of its regulatory parts. The reported "chasm" between the sub-region's Mormon and non-Mormon residents is the result of 150 years of minority experience by those who elsewhere are the majority. This enduring experience of religious difference and reversal of cultural authority is an important dynamic in the Mormon Corridor. While each of the Mormon Corridor's religions has a uniquely valuable story of sacrifice and hope, travail and triumph in this far western frontier, the role of non-Mormon religion in a narrative of the public role of religion in the Great Basin is largely that of opposition.

The great distance between first and second and the existence of no statistically significant third religious community has polarized religious sentiment in

this sub-region of the Mountain West. It has caused some among the non-Mormon population to hold their religious identity more tightly. It has also caused them to forget their differences with other non-Mormon religions and the unaffiliated in order to gain some measure of collective strength in the Mormon Corridor. Thus, the statistical gap between Mormon numbers and those of all other religions becomes an important part of the story of religion in the Mormon Corridor.

The Gap

While it is common to assume that churches over-report their membership and adherent numbers, this appears not to be the case with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ARIS data, based on self-reports by individuals, consistently report higher numbers of Mormons in all regions than the institutionally based NARA data report. Specifically, NARA calculates Mormon representation among all Mountain religious adherents to be 27 percent, but ARIS data show Mormon self-identification at 47 percent. By contrast, NARA data put Catholic affiliation at 34 percent, but ARIS data shows the percent of self-reported Catholics to be 15 percent. In short, more people consider themselves affiliated to the LDS Church than are recognized on formal records of membership.

Whatever this means for the definition of what it is to be a Mormon, for our purposes it means that the NARA numbers are probably too conservative in their description of LDS adherence at 87 and 48 percent in Utah and Idaho, respectively. NARA data also suggests that the gap between Mormon and Catholic representation, as great as it is, may even be greater, if the extent of Catholic self-identification is as low as calculated by ARIS. Of the 12 Idaho counties where NARA data show more Catholics than Mormons, ARIS reverses six and causes the difference in three more to become statistically insignificant. This continuing gap in numbers is paralleled historically by a gap in resources and interfaith affection.

America's majority religions—in numerical terms the Catholics and in cultural hegemonic terms the Protestants—have always been Utah's minorities: outnumbered, out-financed, and unappreciated. Their sense of social dislocation under Mormon establishment was intensified by their own deep hostility to Mormonism as a belief system. As late as 1905, a Presbyterian divine wrote: "While Christianity is from heaven . . . Mormonism is the monstrous offspring of earth and hell. It is a huge monster that would roll back civilization thousands of years."¹⁹ Given this conviction, it was natural that the most consistent public role of Protestant churches in the Great Basin has been that of opposition to the LDS Church, a righteous opposition determined to heal "this open sore of the world."²⁰

Opposition was more than philosophical, however. The first Protestants came to Utah Territory either as representatives of the federal government and

appointed to dismantle the Mormon Kingdom or as missionaries for the eastern reform establishment and commissioned to convert Mormons away from Mormonism. The antagonism each denomination had for the other based on experiences in the East was aggravated by the fact that the post-bellum anti-polygamy campaign was supported by allegations and evidence provided by Protestants who lived among the Mormons in the West.

Utah's ministers were extremely popular on the eastern lecture circuit for their dramatic accounts of the evils of Mormonism. Indeed, the major source of funding for their fledgling congregations came from their efforts to convince national mission boards and the Protestant faithful that Mormon barbarism was a threat to the nation. Their efforts contributed to a national press that made the Mormons universal objects of ridicule and scorn. Burlesque treatments in plays and romantic novels made the Mormon man a symbol of unrestrained and predatory sexuality; the Mormon woman a dupe and sexual toy in a mountain harem; and Mormon children the abused and deformed offspring of monstrous parents. A history of intolerance exists in Utah and Idaho that the Mormons have not forgotten, and these cultural memories subtly color their relation to America's mainstream even today. Arguably, Mormonism's twentieth-century display of middle-class values—its emphasis on law-abiding love for country, and even its pride in achievement within the larger culture—reflect an on-going rebuttal to its nineteenth-century experience with Protestant America.

The Protestant campaign had real political consequences for the LDS Church. Beginning with the Morrill Act in 1862, which equated plural marriage with bigamy, cultural norms were coupled with federal legislative might to impose criminal penalties on individual Mormons and political sanctions on Utah Territory. Congress eventually enacted three additional anti-polygamy statutes that successively placed Utah's territorial courts under federal jurisdiction; imposed civil penalties such as disenfranchisement; and simplified proof for polygamy convictions, sending more than 1,000 Latter-day Saints to prison. The courts finally dissolved the corporate status of the LDS Church and confiscated its property. In Idaho, state lawmakers joined federal ones to impose additional burdens on the Latter-day Saints. In 1884, any Idaho citizen affiliated with a group that believed in polygamy was stripped of the right to vote, hold public office, and serve on juries.

Meanwhile, Mormon leadership strategically placed their settlements throughout the territory to check the establishment of non-Mormon ones. Some of the Idaho colonies were meant specifically to "ward off . . . soldier-miners" who expressed an interest in remaining after the Utah War and military occupation of the Utah Territory.²¹ Experience had taught the Mormons that it took more than fences to make good neighbors, and so they intended to own all the houses

on the block and all the blocks in town. One Mormon leader admitted "we are an aggressive people . . . as we approach the gates of our enemies we buy them out, buy out their ranches, their little settlements."²²

The religious newcomers were no more inclined to peaceful cohabitation than were the Mormons. In 1897, the Presbytery of Utah, with the endorsement of the Baptists and Congregationalists, printed a pamphlet advising the Christian population of "Ten Reasons Why Christians Cannot Fellowship the Mormon Church."

The Protestant churches were less successful in their missionary work than in their political campaign, however. Several reasons account for their failure. In addition to possessing a negative attitude towards potential proselytes, Protestant missionaries lacked both the personnel and financial resources to adequately sustain a presence in any but the most populated parts of the state. The first permanent non-Mormon worship facility was built by the Congregationalists in Salt Lake City in 1865. Its pastor was Rev. Norman McLeod, who had been sent by the American Home Missionary Society to preach Christianity to Utah and chaplain the army assigned to watch over the Mormon Kingdom. Calling their building "Independence Hall," the Congregationalists shared it with other non-Mormon religions, even the Catholics.

Catholics traveled west with less of a political agenda than the Protestants, and hence have less history of antagonism with the Latter-day Saints. Early Spanish explorers (1776) first claimed the area, but did not settle in Utah's southern deserts, returning to New Mexico instead. The Catholics who came in the next century came to stay, building their first church in 1871. Its pastor arrived two years later to minister to the Catholics among the federal troops stationed in the mountains above Salt Lake City. More Catholics came as the railroad and the mining industries took hold. Since these economic developments were experienced as a threat by the Mormons, the two populations did not mix, often settling as we have seen in different parts of the state. Catholic religious orders followed the faithful to provide pastoral, educational, and medical assistance. In 1908, the Cathedral of St. Mary Magdalene was completed. After its renovation in the 1970s, it continues as a landmark of the Catholic presence in Utah.

Not until the completion of the transcontinental railroad did Protestants come in numbers sufficient to create independent congregations. The first Presbyterian minister arrived a month after the tracks were joined, and by 1870 had organized a congregation at a railroad freight center north of Salt Lake. Likewise, the Episcopalians held their first service in 1867 and opened the first non-Mormon day school by summer. St. Mark's School thrives today as a reminder that, as Bishop Tuttle said, "in Utah, especially, schools were the backbone of our missionary work."²³ A Methodist minister arrived by rail in 1870 and conducted his first service at the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific terminal in Ogden. But the

Protestants arrived too late with too little. In 1896, another Methodist minister reported to his board that although \$25 million had been spent on the endeavor, "if two hundred real Mormons have been changed and made into earnest evangelical Christians during [our time here], we have not been able to discover them."²⁴ When the nineteenth-century gambit of the Protestant establishment to eradicate Mormonism by sword and statute failed, their churches were left as isolated outposts in Mormon country. What has been said of one could be said of all: "Clearly, the Presbyterian cause in Utah was in a state of crisis as the nineteenth century ended."²⁵

In part, the Protestants were defeated by their success against polygamy, the end of which also ended donations from the East. In addition, the lack of results from their labors, coupled with the appeal of foreign mission fields, caused the national mission boards to withdraw support. The local representatives of the churches responded to this crisis by combining efforts to minister to their small and scattered flocks. The state was divided and each denomination given responsibility for specific towns. As late as 1930, however, a report on the status of the "Allotment and Occupation of Utah" admitted that entire counties were neglected, such as Morgan County, which had "no Protestant mission. [But] our colporteurs have visited this Country."²⁶ The sense of "Country," both in terms of size and jurisdictional distinctiveness, helped to defeat all but the most organized Protestant efforts at colonization.

Ultimately, the sub-region's religious warfare was solved by a national political compromise that left the Latter-day Saints' political and economic influence largely intact. In 1907, the U.S. agreed to seat Mormon apostle Reed Smoot in the Senate, and the church subordinated itself to the federal marriage laws. In the exchange, modern Mormonism was born. But the experience of conflict left its mark on all the Great Basin's residents.

Not until 1982 did Idaho repeal its "Test Oath" designed to stop Mormons from voting—and, even then, over opposition from some 100,000 voters and 20 years after similar legislation against Chinese and Native Americans had been repealed. Contemporary research has shown that many Idahoans think the Mormons are coercive and manipulative; that they use political influence to impose Mormon norms on others; and that they use social relationships for the sole purpose of conversion. In addition, a significant portion of the population feel that Mormons judge others and exclude them as inferior.²⁷

Attitudes in Utah also reflect continuing religious antagonism. The *Salt Lake Tribune* published results of an elaborate investigation of Utah's interfaith relations on December 9, 2001. Under the title "The Unspoken Divide," the report concluded that Mormons and non-Mormons were separated by a "fault line" recognized by two-thirds of those polled, which "haunt[s] every Utah community"

and both sides of the divide. The sentiments of non-Mormons paralleled the Idaho study. Polarized by their demographic and cultural minority status, Utah's non-Mormon population often defines itself in public opposition to the Mormon majority, as seen in litigation over Main Street Plaza in Salt Lake City. Latter-day Saint feelings were not articulated in as much detail as their counterparts. Reference was made, however, to their predictable resentment at being judged negatively for their church-going, child-bearing, alcohol-averse lifestyle.

Efforts to overcome this polarity constitute one of the central themes of public discourse in the Mormon Corridor. On both sides, religious leaders self-consciously pursue ecumenical efforts. LDS leadership goes to great lengths to share the church's wealth across denominational lines, as shown by contributions to Westminster College (once Presbyterian, but now supported by a consortium of Protestants) and the restoration of Salt Lake City's Catholic Church of the Madeline. Catholics rewarded the LDS Church with an invitation to a member of its First Presidency to participate in its rededication.

But, however ecumenical in spirit, the disparity in size and related sense of powerlessness endures among the Mormon Corridor's other religions. Though, for example, Catholic adherents doubled in the last 10 years, largely through Hispanic immigration, they still constitute a mere 6 percent of total adherents in Utah. During that same period, LDS growth, though at half the rate, raised representation among its adherents from 69 to 87 percent. "We like to say we're the second-largest religious denomination in Utah," Catholic Father Bussen said on February 2, 2002. But, he added, "It's like comparing the size of the mouse to the elephant when they're the only two creatures on earth." The demographic gap and the social-cultural hegemony it supports continues to burden public religion in this sub-region of the Mountain West.

Conclusion

Two basic facts explain the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' enduring power in the Mountain West: one historical, the other theological.

Historically, in America, there were simply too many denominations and too much competition between them for any one to dominate the others. The Latter-day Saints, however, were driven past the edges of America's prairie and found a place that nobody else wanted. To use the old cliché, they turned a lemon into lemonade. Situated between gold mines on the west and rich plains to the east, the Great Basin sheltered Mormonism's establishment in the intermountain West for two generations. Religious pluralism arrived too late and too anemically to vie for the cultural spoils of settlement. Competition for control came most notably from the mining industry, especially in Idaho, and from the U.S. government in Utah. But even America's economic and political power proved insufficient to

fully dislodge the Mormons from their Mountain kingdom, though they were required to reform it in the image of American disestablishment.

Notwithstanding its political reformation, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' contemporary legal battles show that it remains on the edge of what is a permissible relation between American church and state. This cannot be understood without understanding certain fundamental principles of Mormon theology. The LDS Church will remain on the edge of American religious polity as long as it defines its president as a law-giving prophet and its mission as providing temporal order in service to the eternal. Ultimately, the church's claim to sacramental power fuels its economic and political activity and defines its continuing contest with the limits American law sets for American religion. This means, also, that public life in Idaho and Utah will continue to display a quite un-American degree of religious tension and intolerance.

Endnotes

1. I am indebted to Kaye Nickell of Vanderbilt University for her research assistance.
2. D. W. Meinig, "The Mormon Culture Region," *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 55, 2 (1955): 191-220. I am using "core" in the vernacular sense. Technically, for Meinig who discussed the region in terms of "core," "domain," and "sphere" to distinguish population densities in the Mormon Corridor, Utah and southeast Idaho were the "domain" and the Wasatch Front was the core. Today, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints objects to the use of "Mormon Church" as a denominator. It prefers that the institution's entire name be used in order to avoid any inference that the church is not Christian. For the church's guidelines on use of its name, see "Style Guide - The Name of the Church" at <http://www.lds.org/> (July 5, 2002).
3. In the nineteenth century, the Latter-day Saints often referred to this sub-region as the "Great Basin Kingdom," a name reflecting the domination by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints of political, social, and economic, as well as religious features of the culture. See Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958).
4. Thomas Alexander, *Utah, The Right Place: The Official Centennial History* (Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1995), 186. Note, however, other studies indicate that, by the 1970s, concentrations of Mormons within their corridor had increased by 10 percent. "This means," the authors concluded, "that Saints are moving into the core-domain (and probably multiplying) faster than" other identifiable groups. Dean R. Louder and Lowell Bennion,

- "Mapping Mormons Across the Modern West," in Richard H. Jackson, ed., *The Mormon Role in the Settlement of the West* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 116-166.
5. Obviously, both the states of Idaho and Utah were originally home to large tribes of Native Americans. Even today, several reservations dot the landscape and native peoples participate in the life of the now European-dominated cultures. The 2000 NARA numbers and the data derived from the 2001 American Religious Identity Survey (ARIS) that provide the basis for this analysis do not provide separate data for Native Americans. Therefore, no account can be given of their religious influence on public life in this sub-region. For a description of the cultural sub-regions within southern Idaho, see Peter Boag's "Mountain, Plain, Desert, River: The Snake River Region as a Western Crossroads," in *Many Wests: Place, Culture, & Regional Identity* (University Press of Kansas, 1997), 180-182.
 6. For the purposes of this analysis I have designated the following 15 counties as "southeastern": Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Bonneville, Butte, Caribou, Cassia, Franklin, Fremont, Jefferson, Madison, Minidoka, Oneida, Power, and Teton. This leaves the following 19 counties in the southwest: Ada, Adams, Blaine, Boise, Camas, Canyon, Clark, Custer, Elmore, Gem, Gooding, Jerome, Lemhi, Lincoln, Owyhee, Payette, Twin Falls, Valley, and Washington. The northern panhandle is comprised of Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Clearwater, Idaho, Kootenai, Latah, Lewis, Nes Perce, and Shoshone counties.
 7. Among the church adherents in Daggett, Piute, and Rich counties, 100 percent are LDS; for Garfield County the ratio dips to 99.5 percent.
 8. *Report on the Internal Commerce of the United States for the Year 1890*, as quoted in Lowell C. Bennion, "Mormon Country a Century Ago: A Geographer's View," in Thomas Alexander, ed., *The Mormon People: Their Character and Traditions* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), 17.
 9. The third most populous county, Kootenai, is in the Idaho panhandle, just east of Spokane, Washington. In the total population, 66.8 percent are unaffiliated or uncounted. Only 13.3 percent are Mormon.
 10. I am grateful to Lawrence Coates, Gary Walker, and James Weatherby for help with the Idaho dimension of the story of Mormonism in Idaho's public life.
 11. Orson Pratt, quoted in B.H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 7:515.
 12. The bibliography on nineteenth century Mormonism is enormous. A good starting point for a general historical background is Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). For an exhaustive and well organized bibliography of publications on Mormon history and sociology, see

- James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, *Studies in Mormon History, 1830-1997: An Indexed Bibliography with a Topical Guide to Published Social Science Literature on the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press and BYU Press, 2000)
13. The most recent discussion of the polygamy conflict is Sarah Barringer Gordon *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
 14. Gordon B. Hinckley interview with Larry King, September 8, 1998. A transcript of the interview is available at http://www.lds.org/en/4_News_Update/19980908_CNN_Transcript.html (09/29/98) or see CNN Transcript 98090800V22.
 15. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 173.
 16. Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 13, 34. Recent books on LDS dissent include John Sillito and Susan Staker, eds., *Mormon Mavericks: Essays on Dissenters* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002) and James W. Ure, *Leaving the Fold: Candid Conversations with Inactive Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999).
 17. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 34.
 18. Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: the Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1984), 96.
 19. Thomas Cary Johnson, *Mormonism* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, Printers, n.d.), 29.
 20. E. O. Guarrant, *The Mormons* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1899), 12.
 21. Bennion, "Mormon Country a Century Ago," 17.
 22. Ibid.
 23. Quoted in Miriam B. Murphey, "Arrival of the Episcopal Church in Utah, 1867," reprinted in *History Blazer*, October 1995.
 24. F. S. Beggs, "The Mormon Problem in the West," *Methodist Review* 78 (September 1896): 755-756.
 25. Mark I. Banker, *Presbyterian Missions and Cultural Interaction in the Far Southwest, 1850-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 153.
 26. W. M. P[aden], "Notes for a Map of Allotment and Occupation in Utah." Wiley M. Paden Collection, Special Collections, Giovale Library, Westminster College, Salt Lake City, Utah.
 27. Keith G. Allred, "Relations Between LDS & Non-LDS Idaho Residents," n.d., copy in author's possession. Used with permission.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLARIZED TRIBES: COLORADO, WYOMING, AND MONTANA

Philip Deloria

Different sorts of settlements in different places attract different kinds of people. Presumably this leads to different kinds of religious traditions and practices and different sorts of public expression of religion. While some places are easily characterized by religion, the states that join together the northern Rocky Mountains with the edge of the northern Great Plains—Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana—generally appear in surveys and polls as places *without* much religious clarity. That appearance is confirmed experientially.

The South can be seen and experienced in terms of evangelical practice and African-American Protestantism, while the Atlantic states have high proportions of Jewish and Catholic adherents, the product of urban immigration patterns. The Pacific Northwest was settled early and often by Protestant immigrants. And the list can go on: Southern California and Hispanic Catholicism, Southeast Michigan and Islam. Even within the Mountain West region, it is possible to parse out New Mexico and Arizona for the cultural and political weight attached to Hispanic Catholicism and to Native American religions. Utah and Idaho stand out as states in which gravity pulls toward Salt Lake City and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In all these places, a general description of region—or sub-region as the case may be—can reasonably be offered by turning, in some part of the definition, to religion.

Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana simply do not fit such a pattern. In some areas within these states, of course, individual religions may dominate. In Butte, Montana, for instance, high proportions of Irish immigrant miners kept Catholicism dominant for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Now, however, Billings has Montana's largest population of Catholics. Or, one