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## Joseph F. Smith: The Father of Modern Mormonism

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**Joseph F. Smith: The Father of Modern Mormonism**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Humanities

By

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B.S., Brigham Young University Idaho, 2010

2014  
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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY  
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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER  
MY SUPERVISION BY Alexander Reid Harrison ENTITLED  
Joseph F Smith: The Father of Modern Mormonism BE ACCEPTED IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
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## ABSTRACT

Harrison, Alexander Reid. M.H. Department of Humanities, Wright State University, 2014. Joseph F. Smith: The Father of Modern Mormonism

Joseph F. Smith (1838-1918) was the father of modern Mormonism. Nephew of the founding Prophet, President Joseph Smith Jr. (1805-1844), Joseph F. Smith was the sixth president of the Mormon Church. During his presidency (1901-1918), he redefined Mormonism. He helped change the perception of what a Mormon was, both inside and outside the faith. He did so by organizing the structure of the faith theologically, historically, ideologically, and institutionally. In doing this, he set the tone for what Mormonism would become, and set a standard paradigm for the world of what a Mormon is. Joseph F. Smith became the second founder of Mormonism. The founding president and prophet of the faith, Joseph Smith Jr., developed the doctrines and concepts of Mormonism; Joseph F. Smith organized these concepts into a set Mormon identity.

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## **Introduction**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded on April 6, 1830 in western New York. Mormonism, as it has become known, is a restorationist movement. A restorationist movement believes that their faith is the restored pure version of a religious belief system. Mormonism is preached by its followers as Christ's Church in its purest form.

The Mormon faith was formed out of the Second Great Awakening. Many new religious movements were developed during the Second Great Awakening. Most of these new movements either died off or combined with other movements, but some endured. Mormonism was one of the enduring movements. Starting with just a small group of followers, Mormonism has developed into one of the most successful religious organizations in American history.

Mormon history can be broken down into two important periods, the developmental (1830-1910) and the modern (1910-present). A strong institutional base, a clear ideological focus, and large amounts of growth and stability define the modern Mormon Church. The developmental period, as the title implies, could not have been more different. This was a time of change, evolution, and confusion. The ideological, theological, historical, and institutional aspects of the faith were still being developed in this period

The transition from the developmental to the modern period was not a smooth one. Mormon history tells of the conflict and eventual compromise that took place during this transition. Confusion from within, in regards to doctrine, as well as contention with the outside world forced the faith to seek greater harmony and consensus. The Mormon leadership played an important role in implementing this new ideology. The most important leader in this period was Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of Mormonism.

The nephew of Joseph Smith Jr. (1805-1844), the religion's founder and first president, Joseph F. Smith<sup>1</sup> or JFS was Mormonism's first president born in the faith. He served as president during the transition from the developmental to the modern period of Mormon history. This thesis focuses on this transitional phase, and explores the influence of JFS during this event.

Two theories will be used to understand this transition. These two theories come from two very different scholars, H. Richard Niebuhr and Thomas Kuhn. Niebuhr was a Christian theologian and scholar, while Kuhn was a philosopher of science history. Kuhn and Niebuhr both explore the historical evolution of a concept or belief system. They both maintain that this evolution occurs in a series of distinct stages that roughly correspond to the shift from the developmental to modern period in Mormon history. Neither of these theories alone is able to explain fully the transition that took place in Mormonism, but together they build a solid framework of understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> The Mormon Church has had many leaders and figures named Joseph Smith. For example, there have been three Mormon presidents named Joseph Smith: President Joseph Smith Jr. the founder, Joseph F. Smith the sixth president, and Joseph Fielding Smith the tenth president. To avoid confusion this paper will refer to Joseph F. Smith as JFS.

Niebuhr, in his book *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, explores the transition of the sect into the denominational church. He looks at how sects are formed by breaking off from established religious institutions. Over time these new sects transition into churches or denominations. The denominational church is the fundamental religious organization in American society. Niebuhr argues that “the churches of Europe after migrating to America ... become sects” (145). Over time these sects were influenced by “the establishment of ordered society” and transitioned into denominational style churches (145). New sects then split off from these denominational churches, starting the cycle all over again.

Thomas Kuhn’s theory, which is presented in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, explains the development of the paradigm model. His theory explores how scientific paradigms are formed, how they gain acceptance and then eventually fall away when new paradigms come to replace them.

Niebuhr begins by explaining some of the key differences between sects and churches. Sects are not established institutions, but rather social movements, often fueled by religious fervor, that people join by free choice. Churches and denominations are established institutions. People are often born into and die as members of these groups (Niebuhr 17-18). Niebuhr explains that “sects are exclusive in character,” while churches and denominations are more “national in scope” (17). Sects are looking for the chosen few, while churches and denominations are looking for the chosen many. When it comes to religious practice, “individual religious experience and expression” are very important to the sect (129). Churches and denominations, on the other hand, are more focused on “a

milder, steadier, and more uniform type of emotional life,” which represents “a less individual, more common human need” (129).

Denominational churches emerge from sects. In a sense, a sect is the experimental period in the history of the American style denominational church. It is a time when new ideas are brought forth. Some of these new ideas will remain a part of movement, while others will be tossed aside. In many ways, a church is a more broadly accepted form of a sect.

According to Kuhn’s theory, a scientific paradigm is the final outcome of a period of exploration and theory, just like the church is to the sect. Kuhn defines a paradigm as a system of “universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners” (viii). A paradigm is a point of understanding, an agreed upon a model or archetype within an academic field. Kuhn goes on to explain that paradigms have the power to lure “an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity” (10). A new paradigm must be so decisive and believable that whatever theory it represents brings together people with competing theories.

Both of these theories involve multiple stages. Niebuhr hypothesizes a two-stage cycle; however, I argue that the process actually has three stages. According to Niebuhr a sect breaks off from an established church or a denomination; it then grows and over time becomes institutionalized. Step three happens when this newly formed religious institution spawns sects of its own. Kuhn’s theory also involves three stages: the pre-paradigm stage; the normal science stage, when the scientific community is working within the paradigm; and the stage of scientific revolutions, when paradigms shift.

During the pre-paradigm stage, scientists are working within their own separate personal theories. The scientific community has yet to accept one specific way of understanding something. Kuhn says, “Paradigms gain their status because they are more successful than their competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute” (23). The best and/or strongest paradigms will gradually win broader acceptance.

Kuhn’s pre-paradigm phase roughly corresponds to Niebuhr’s sect phase. Both of these phases are times of confusion and crisis. Both seek to form new ideas that are often, at least initially, at odds with the majority. But Niebuhr adds a class dimension to the process. He points out that “in Protestant history the sect has ever been the child of an outcast minority,” developing out of “the religious revolts of the poor” (19). These revolts occur when people reject the established form of religion and seek out a new way of thinking. Like the pre-paradigm phase, this is a time of study and development. Although many new ideas will surface, only some will be accepted.

Kuhn calls his second stage normal science. Normal science occurs when a group accepts a certain theory as truth; the paradigm is developed. This paradigm becomes the new rule. Scientists are working with what they believe is fact, and evaluating and testing it to make the paradigm stronger. These scientists are trying to “add to the scope and precision with which the paradigm can be applied” in whatever field of research it is in (Kuhn 36). They are trying to make the paradigm stronger by studying it and evaluating its reasoning.

Kuhn’s normal science roughly corresponds to Niebuhr’s church or denominational phase. As the denomination develops from a sect, its focus changes from

searching and discovering to the new “system of doctrine which it has formulated” (Niebuhr 18). Religious zeal is replaced with “easily imparted creeds” (20). Stability and organization become the norm. There is no more looking for change; the group is now trying to strengthen what it has developed.

Kuhn’s last stage is called scientific revolutions. It is within this stage that paradigms shift. During a scientific revolution a new idea or theory gradually becomes the accepted view by all who are involved in the field. Kuhn says, “at times of revolution, when normal-scientific tradition changes, the scientist’s perception of his environment must be re-educated” (112). What was accepted before is no longer the rule. A new rule has come along and replaced it. To Niebuhr a parallel process occurs when new sects are formed and break away from the old churches and denominations. These new sects slowly evolve into new denominations, effectively starting the cycle over again.

It is important to note, though, that in religious revolution the new sect, and eventual denominational church, does not totally replace the old one, like in Kuhn’s paradigm theory. These churches and denominations will often become rivals and coexist, much like what happened in the Protestant Reformation. At times, however, major new movements do nearly eliminate their predecessors, like the initial rise of Christianity in Europe and Buddhism in Asia.

Consolidating both of these hypotheses, it could be argued that the church or denomination is the paradigm of the religious model. Unlike a sect, the denominational church is uniform and provides answers for a community, rather than questions. Not all involved agree on what the new denomination is preaching, but its purpose is to bring

uniformity to the sect that came before it. Just like the paradigm to the scientific world, the denomination solidifies common understanding from the hypothesis that was the sect.

Around the turn of the twentieth century the Mormon leadership was searching for an identity. The theological and social aspects of Mormon faith and culture had been evolving since its beginning; however, these aspects had never been organized into an easily understood structure. With constant evolution and no true consensus, Mormonism was in the pre-paradigm sect phase during the nineteenth century. Mormonism was developing and transitioning from a young nineteenth century sect, into an established twentieth century denominational movement. Combining Kuhn's and Niebuhr's theories, I argue that at this moment the Mormon denominational paradigm was born. JFS and his fellow leaders created this denominational paradigm to move the Mormon faith into the modern period.

This work will explore in detail the evolution of the Mormon denominational paradigm. It will examine the ideology, theology, history, and institutions that make up the new denominational structure of Mormonism. These topics will make up the chapters of the main body of this work. Each chapter will examine one of these topics and show how JFS used it to form the denominational paradigm.

After looking in chapters one and two at the difficulties and characteristics of early Mormonism, as well as the early life of JFS, chapter three will focus on ideology. This chapter explores the Americanizing of the faith. It considers Mormon assimilation and acceptance of the modern American political system, as well as the American economic system. It shows Mormonism's first major steps away from polygamy and isolationism and into mainstream society. A sect is often established in opposition to

mainline religion and society. Mormonism became less oppositional and started adopting broader American values. Once the sect becomes a denominational faith, it moves more into the mainstream. Mormonism was one of these sects that slowly transitioned and assimilated into the majority.

Chapter four examines the evolution of Mormon theology. The Mormon denominational paradigm required a unified belief system. This system eliminated or streamlined many of the more controversial theological ideas left over from the pre-paradigm sect phase. This unification reduced the internal conflict caused by the lack of consensus. This chapter will explore the role JFS played in this process. It also looks at JFS's influence on the development and the modern use of many of the doctrines and principles associated with Mormonism. It focuses on principles such as the nature of God and man, and the First Vision of President Joseph Smith Jr., when he claimed to see God and Christ. It will also explain the rise of the Word of Wisdom, the faith's law of health, and the role of modern revelation in Mormonism. All of these ideas became core principles of the faith during the JFS administration and beyond.

Chapter five focuses on the new role history started to play in Mormonism during JFS's administration. How did the acquisition of historic places from the Mormon past, and the building of visitor centers and monuments play into the new Mormon identity? These sites and monuments helped the Mormons control their public image for the first time. When a group controls its image it controls its identity. Mormonism began to use its history to control its public image by using days of remembrance and a more "ritualized history" to smooth over the darker periods of its past (Bitton 183). JFS helped build a history for Mormonism's new identity.

The last chapter, or chapter six, is about institutional reform, the building of a new church headquarters, and the opening up of Salt Lake City through the grand Hotel Utah. This chapter also focuses on the reemergence of temple construction, and on expansion outside of Utah. It also explores the creation of a more organized church education system. The Mormon denominational paradigm required a modern institutional structure. This chapter illustrates the disorganization of the institution during the pre-paradigm sect phase, and the continued organization and continuity after the Mormon denominational paradigm was established.

These chapters work together to show the rise of the Mormon denominational paradigm during the presidency of JFS. Each chapter helps explain the changes in perception, culture and spirituality that happened during JFS's administration. These changes form the foundation for the modern Mormon faith.

This thesis employs a variety of different primary sources. JFS kept personal journals throughout much of his life. Access to these journals, especially those written during his presidency, is restricted by the Church. Some information about JFS is hard to find because of this restricted access. A biography written by his son Joseph Fielding Smith, in 1938, quotes extensively from his journals, allowing for some access to these documents. Other useful sources are personal accounts JFS gave in conference reports, personal letters, journals of his closest associates, as well as formal and informal speeches. These documents are used throughout to paint a proper picture of this man and his revolutionary influence on the history of the Mormon Church.

## **I. Mormonism in Crisis**

The Mormon developmental period, also called the pre-paradigm sect phase, was an essential time in the historical narrative of Mormonism. During this time, Mormonism was in a continual state of crisis and confusion over doctrinal practices and new social ideas. Because of this crisis the faith was unable to stabilize during this period. Conflicting views from both inside and outside of faith put the Mormons on very soft ground. By the turn of the twentieth century Mormonism was in need of a new direction.

According to Kuhn's theory the pre-paradigm phase "is regularly marked by frequent and deep debates over legitimate methods, problems, and standards" (47-48). What are the best ideas and what is the best way to implement them? During the developmental period Mormonism had to face this problem. What practices were good for the faith and what practices were holding it back? The Mormons were in a perplexing period for most of nineteenth century. The faith was internally trying to move forward while outside forces continued to push it backward.

Internally, Mormonism was trying to establish a theological focus. What principles defined what it meant to be a Mormon? Throughout the entire century this question would continue to be asked by both members and non-members alike. Outwardly, the faith was moving toward social ideals that the outside world thought were harmful. The Mormon practice of polygamy and its desire for an independent separate communal kingdom drove this external fear.

These issues expose the deep and building conflict Mormonism was having with the outside world during the nineteenth century. Sects by nature are at odds with the greater society. Niebuhr wrote that “the sect centers, as a rule, in devotion to a Christian ethics radically different from the social ethics of its contemporary society” (126). The Mormons were trying to implement ideas that conflicted with American society as a whole, such as polygamy and communalism. These ideas are what caused much of the confusion and confrontation Mormonism was experiencing during the developmental period.

Mormonism’s theological focus, the merits of polygamy, and the communal kingdom were all being debated during the developmental period. These issues explain the problems facing Mormonism both inside and outside the faith. Mormonism’s lack of uniformity during this period is an example of how the faith had yet to evolve from a sect to a denominational style church. Nineteenth-century Mormonism was attempting to build a movement based on elements that never fully materialized. The failure of these elements gave rise to the Mormon denominational paradigm JFS’s administration ushered in.

### **Theological Confusion**

Mormonism experienced fluctuation in its theological focus during the nineteenth century. Though founded in 1830, Mormonism would continue developing as a movement for nearly a century. The founder of the faith, President Joseph Smith Jr., wrote between 1830 and 1844 nearly all the doctrinal tenets of the faith, but the faith was never truly systemized during the early period. It is a misconception by many that

Mormonism is the same now as it was during the beginning period. Looking at the growth and development of Mormon theology, it is easy to see the evolution and construction of the Mormon lifestyle and belief system. This theological fluctuation shows how deeply ingrained Mormonism was in the pre-paradigm sect phase during this century.

Thomas G. Alexander, in his paper “The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology,” explains the different phases in the growth of Mormon theology. He states the first phase, which began in the early 1830s, was “the initial era of Mormon doctrinal development” (1). This period represents the very beginning of Mormonism.

During this period The Book of Mormon was published, forever differentiating the Mormons from every other new Christian sect. Missionaries were beginning to be sent out all over the country to preach about their new found faith and its new scripture. In 1830, Mormonism issued the “Articles and Covenants”. This document lays out basic Mormon beliefs, as well as the duties of many priesthood offices, and how to know who is prepared to be baptized (“Articles” 1). It does not reveal any of the complicated theological concepts Mormonism would later be known by. Even though it had a new scripture, Mormonism at this time was still very similar to many other restorationist sects. Most of the Mormons more distinctive theologies had not yet been developed. Many of these new concepts emerged in the beginning of the 1840s.

The 1840s were a time of theological evolution in Mormonism. This evolution started with the introduction of the principle of baptism for the dead in 1840. Baptism for the dead is the belief that a person can be baptized as a proxy for someone who has died

without knowing Mormonism. Further clarification of this practice was given in 1841 and can be found in the book of Doctrine and Covenants section 124. The Doctrine and Covenants, also known as the D&C, is a collection of Mormon revelations and instructions. The doctrine of eternal, as well as plural marriage or polygamy, came about in 1843. This doctrine is found in section 132 of the D&C. Also, in 1843, President Joseph Smith Jr. revealed the Mormon view of the Godhead. He began to teach that God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost were separate and distinct beings, with the former two having physical eternal bodies (D&C 130). 1844 is also when President Joseph Smith Jr. revealed the concept of eternal progression, and believers progressing to become like God (J. Smith, “King Follett” 13-17).

After the murder of President Joseph Smith Jr. in 1844, Mormonism entered a phase of confusion. How to implement these new doctrines given by President Smith in a coherent system had not been developed yet. Since many of the new doctrines developed by President Smith came near the end of his life, some only months before his death, many of these doctrines were not fully understood. Polygamy, for example, did not become an open practice in the faith until the 1850s. This caused internal conflict and confusion. This confusion would last for the rest of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.

Confusion over the application of many early revelations would continue throughout the century to cause internal strife and disharmony. Internal confusion over theology was just a part of the crisis at hand. External conflict over Mormon polygamy and communal living would push the faith to near extinction. As problems increased throughout the century, this new movement was nearly destroyed.

## **Polygamy**

Polygamy would prove to be the most contentious element inside and outside of the nineteenth century Mormon faith. The history of Mormon polygamy is very complicated. Polygamy has been a part of Mormonism since almost the beginning, but was not practiced in the open right away.

The earliest traces of the practice go back to President Joseph Smith Jr. in 1831. W.W. Phelps, a respected Mormon leader, once heard a revelation given by President Smith about taking wives among the Native American people, while doing missionary work among them. He later asked in private how a married man could take a native woman as his wife. President Smith replied, “In the same manner that Abraham took Hagar” (Hardy 36-37). President Smith was referencing the practice of plural marriage or polygamy in the Old Testament.

President Joseph Smith Jr. took many wives during his life, all in secret. The exact number of wives is still up for debate. Some scholars claim it could have been as many as eighty-four or as low as twenty-eight. Some of these marriages, though, were “sealings” meant to count only in the next life (Ostling 58). The term sealing, in this context, means the wife would be married to President Smith as a spouse in the afterlife; no real marriage relationship happened in this life besides the sealing itself. Some women were even sealed to him after his death (58).

In 1843, President Joseph Smith Jr. claimed to receive a revelation about polygamy that is now known as section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This section would become the defining revelation on the practice. President Smith did not write or

speak about the subject in public. The only major document where he speaks about the practice is Doctrine and Covenants section 132.

Section 132 justified polygamy by referencing its practice among the ancient patriarchs and prophets. Mormonism is built on the concept of restoration, bringing back Christ's gospel in what they perceive as its pure form. In section 132 God told President Joseph Smith Jr., "I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the priesthood, wherein I restore all things" (D&C 132: 45). This restoration of all things included Old Testament principles as well. Polygamy was a part of the Old Testament, having been practiced by many of the ancient patriarchs. Its ancient practice justified its inclusion in the restoration.

Restoration and patriarchal practices are only some of the explanations for polygamy. Some conclude that polygamy was all about sex and lust. Whether the practice was for carnal or spiritual purposes will never fully be known, only speculated upon. Like many doctrines in the early developmental phase, the rationale for plural marriage was never fully explained.

Like many sects, Mormonism suffered persecution in its early years. This forced the faithful to move from state to state looking for refuge from their attackers. Most of this persecution came from misunderstandings about the nature of Mormonism, as well as political and economic concerns. Polygamy would eventually become the focus of Mormon persecution, but it did not truly factor in until the Mormons had settled in Nauvoo, Illinois. The first conflicts over polygamy would come from the inside out.

The document that became section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants was initially only revealed to high ranking leaders and their wives. It was not told to all the

leaders at once, but slowly over time. Some embraced the practice, while others were opposed to it. The ordinary members were not aware of this new and different practice.

William Law was a high ranking faithful Mormon leader. Law had been a counselor to President Joseph Smith Jr. and worked side by side with him. Upon hearing about the revelation on polygamy from President Smith's brother Hyrum Smith, Law soon found himself in opposition to the practice and the president (Van Wagoner 63). Law would go on to form the now infamous *Nauvoo Expositor* newspaper (65). Law used this paper to expose Mormon polygamy to the world. The publication of this newspaper led directly to the assassination of President Joseph Smith Jr. in 1844, which led to the Mormon expulsion from the state of Illinois.

This was the first instance where polygamy was at the core of the opposition against the Mormon people, but it would not be the last. Polygamy would continue to be a controversial topic long after the death of President Joseph Smith Jr. and throughout the rest of the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.

Polygamy would continue to be practiced in secret for many years after President Joseph Smith Jr.'s assassination. In 1850, Apostle John Taylor refuted the practice of polygamy while speaking in England, saying, "We declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband" (8).

Early editions of the Doctrine and Covenants state that "one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband" (J. Smith, *History* 247). This section, the original section 101, was a part of the earliest printing of the book in 1835 and stayed in the book for decades. It is important to point out that this section was not given as a revelation. It was presented by W.W. Phelps to the membership of the faith, and reflected what the

Mormons believed until that point. President Joseph Smith Jr. was not even present when it was announced (246). Though not an official revelation, this section was taught as scripture among the Mormon people. Polygamy, though it was being practiced, was still not in the open and stayed that way even after the Mormons had arrived in Utah.

Once the Mormons became fully settled in the mountain west, polygamy became a fully established part of their beliefs. The principle was officially announced and defended on August 29, 1852 (Van Wagoner 84). President Brigham Young said on that day that the practice will be “fostered and believed in by the more intelligent portion of the world as one of the best doctrines ever proclaimed to any people” (“Sacrament” 281). The practice was now in the open, for the entire world to see.

The openness of the Mormon leadership caught the eye of many people across the country. Polygamy was a very taboo issue and very frowned upon at the time. The practice conflicted with many of the fundamental principles of the dominant American value system. Oppositional doctrine is often associated with sectarian movements. Polygamy was an abnormal social idea that placed Mormonism distinctly out of any uniform Christian tradition.

Though controversial polygamy was legal in the territories. Its growth led to government concerns over the practice, and eventually to a long struggle between the Mormons and the U.S. Government over its demise. Polygamy would become a hot button political issue.

At the Republican National Convention in 1856, the Republican Party took a hard stance on polygamy. The party was looking for a political platform. The eradication of polygamy and slavery became a key part of the party’s new platform. Republicans even

put polygamy on the same moral ground as slavery. Joseph R. Hawley, chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, stated, “It is both the right and the imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism--polygamy and slavery” (H.H. Smith 12).

Once in control of the Presidency and the Congress, the Republicans began to build the first real legislation against polygamy and Mormonism, the 1862 Morrill Act. This act made it illegal to practice polygamy in the territories. Violation of this act was “punishable by a fine and five years in prison” (Davis 52).

The next attack came in the form of the Supreme Court case, *Reynolds vs. The United States* (1878-1879). In this case a Mormon polygamist was put on trial as a test to see if the First Amendment protects polygamy as a religious practice. Reynolds was seeking immunity from the previous anti-bigamy laws explaining, “His religion required him to practice polygamy ... failure to practice polygamy would result in eternal damnation” (Sekulow 102). He was eventually denied his right to practice. This case helped define “the belief/conduct distinction” (102). The Supreme Court’s ruling that Mormons cannot put this belief into practice set the tone for the rest of the century, and helped lead to the demise of polygamy. After *Reynolds vs. the United States*, the government moved to make polygamy a felony. The Edmunds Act in 1882 took away many of the civil rights of offenders. Polygamists were now unable to vote or be a part of a jury (Sealing 72).

After the Edmunds Act became law, many Mormons were convicted of violating these laws, including many leaders. The Edmund Tucker Act in 1887 was the final blow against Mormonism. This act led to the seizure of nearly all of the faith’s financial assets,

as well as the removal of some children from polygamist families (Sealing 72). Both of these acts crippled Mormonism, and forced its leaders to rethink their policies.

The enforcement of these acts pushed the Mormons into a dark period. Tithes from the members decreased, due to their crippled economic situation. Debt began to pile up and “by mid-1898 the Church stood 2.3 Million in debt” (Alexander, *Mormonism* 5). The faith was barely staying together. Mormonism could not fight the law anymore. It was time to change or risk losing everything.

The first step Mormons took to end polygamy came in the form of a Manifesto by then President Wilford Woodruff in 1890. This Manifesto called for the ending of the practice of polygamy among the Mormon people. President Woodruff states in the Manifesto, “Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise” (D&C, Official Declaration 1).

Upon issuing the Manifesto President Woodruff gave an important address. He asked a question to the congregation: is it good for the faith “to continue to attempt to practice plural marriage...at the cost of the confiscation and loss of all the Temples, and the stopping of all the ordinances therein...and the imprisonment of the First Presidency” and many other leaders? He then asks, whether it would be better “to cease the practice” of polygamy “and submit to the law, and through doing so leave the Prophets, Apostles and fathers at home, so that they can instruct the people and attend to the duties of the

Church” (D&C, Official Declaration 1). By asking these questions, President Woodruff was trying to make an important point; the practice of polygamy was not worth the cost.

President Woodruff wanted his people to understand that ending polygamy was necessary for the continuation and growth of the faith. The Mormons could not afford to continue fighting this cause, at the risk of losing everything. Many Mormon men and leaders had been locked up for breaking polygamy laws already. Properties had been taken, and many more were at risk to be taken. This era of fear and hiding needed to end in order for the faith to grow.

Though the Manifesto was very important it did not completely end polygamy in Mormonism. The Manifesto was more of a starting point for a new era of change and progression. This document did, however, give the government more faith in the Mormons. The government returned nearly all the properties and land it had taken in October 1893, and allowed Utah to become a state in January 1896 (K. Young 378). For a time, Mormonism and the government were civil, and even started working with one another.

Before the Manifesto, many questioned if Mormons could honestly abandon polygamy. In 1886 Rev C.P. Lyford, an opponent of Mormonism, wrote, “In fact, the greater danger at the present hour is that it [Mormonism] will abandon polygamy for a time ... Utah would be admitted as a State, and then the dominant power in Utah could revive polygamy and its other practices, and snap its fingers in the face of the Federal Government” (10-11). The next decade would prove this statement both true and false, depending on one's point of view.

Over time, misunderstandings about polygamy began to arise from both inside and outside the faith. Many anti-Mormon groups began to question Mormonism's true stance on polygamy. These groups claimed to have proof that new polygamous marriages were taking place. While these claims were refuted by the Mormon leadership in the open, secretly many of its leaders felt the Manifesto was just a front to appease the government. Confusion over the faith's true stance on polygamy led to many unauthorized plural marriages.

The allegations of new polygamous marriages among the Mormon people was proven true with the case of B.H. Roberts. A prominent leader and historian in the Mormon faith, B.H. Roberts was elected to the United States Congress in 1898. Upon his election, it was discovered that, in 1894, he had entered into a polygamous marriage. Though the Mormon leadership denied that there was any resurgence of the practice, B.H. Roberts was not allowed to take his seat in Congress (Hardy 371). The tension between the United States government and Mormonism over polygamy started to rise again, and would spill over into the next century.

The American people were both intrigued and disgusted by polygamy. Why discuss political problems, when it is easier to talk about the practice of polygamy on American soil? This is how politicians gained the support of the people to take action against the Mormon faith. The focus on polygamy took the focus away from what many felt was a bigger problem, the Mormon desire for an independent kingdom in the West. The attempts to build this kingdom allowed the Mormon hierarchy a great deal of control in the western territories. Polygamy would become the scapegoat for the government's opposition to the social, political, and economic power of the Mormon hierarchy.

## **Separate Kingdom and Utopianism**

Niebuhr explains that new sects usually reject mainstream societal norms. Sects will “prefer isolation to compromise” and will often “refuse to participate in government” (Niebuhr 19). Mormonism in the nineteenth century was advocating all of these ideas. Mormonism’s isolation in West caused conflict with the external world. The faith had become separated from the nation as a whole in an attempt to build a new society. These separatist and isolationist ideas show how Mormonism was deeply ingrained in a sectarian type belief system in the nineteenth century. At times a sect may even be looking to build its own source of government. Mormonism was doing precisely that.

Mormonism had been seeking to build a theocratic kingdom since the 1830s. The faithful believed that this kingdom would be built on the American continent. Mormons held the continent of America to be sacred in nature, not the government or the nation. The American continent was a special place set apart for the restoration of Christ’s gospel. Mormons even believe that Jackson County, Missouri will be the site of the New Jerusalem during the second coming of Christ.

The destiny of the American continent was where the United States Government and nineteenth century Mormon theology diverged. Mormons believed that there needed to be a theologically based government built on this land in preparation for the second coming of Jesus Christ. The legislation governing the new theocratic government would come directly from God. In order for this to happen the United States would collapse to make way for this kingdom of God on earth (Hansen, *Quest* 43-44). Seeking to achieve this goal put Mormons at odds with their American neighbors.

Early Mormon history shows that the faith was making preparations for the building of this new theocratic government. President Joseph Smith Jr. organized what became known as the Council of Fifty on March 11, 1844, consisting of the entire quorum of the twelve as well as many of his closest allies. President Smith made himself the president of the council, which became the tradition for all the future Mormon presidents (Hansen, *Quest* 60-61). “The Council of Fifty was to symbolize the other-worldly world order that would be established during the millennial reign of Christ on earth” (Quinn, “Council” 163). This council was to be the temporal government of the earth during the second coming and millennium.

Upon leaving Illinois in the 1840s, the Mormons left the United States, and for a time were not a part of the country at all. Shortly after arriving in what would become Utah, the leadership formed a government that was led by the “Mormon ecclesiastical body” (Arrington and Bitton 162). The Council of Fifty played a key role in establishing what became known as the State of Deseret in 1849, which governed the Mormon people for nearly two years. Brigham Young was elected Governor of Deseret, while one of his counselors was elected Chief Justice. Many Mormon leaders held office in this new government (162).

Deseret was eventually established by the United States Government as the Utah Territory in 1850 (J. Fielding Smith, *Essentials* 477). Though not in control of the local government, the Council of Fifty continued to make decisions on behalf of the Mormon people for most of the nineteenth century. The council’s last official meeting was held on October 9, 1884. The demise of the council can be attributed to the assimilation of

American politics into Mormonism and Utah. “The voluntary theocracy of Mormon Utah had given way to functional politics” (Quinn, “Council” 190).

The Council of Fifty is an example of the control the Mormon hierarchy had over the political destiny of its people. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Mormon hierarchy had control over most of the political choices its people made. Making political decisions as a group, or by the leaders for the group, was a controversial part of Mormonism from the very beginning.

Along with political aspirations, utopian and communal ideas also played an important role in the power the Mormon leadership had over their people. The desire to live communally was a major part of the Mormon political kingdom. From the very beginning of Mormonism, communal practices began to creep to the forefront of the faith. These ideas would continue to be taught and experimented on for the rest of the nineteenth century.

In February 1831, President Joseph Smith Jr. initiated what is called the law of consecration (D&C: 42). The law of consecration was a communal practice relating initially to land and property. In this law, the leadership of the faith would own all properties and disperse them by need to each family (D&C 42:32). This was the first communal law in the faith, and the first time total control of all aspects of the Mormon community was put in the hands of the hierarchy.

This original communal experiment failed, mostly due to misunderstanding and backbiting. Persecution from the outside world also played a role. This persecution did not allow the community of Mormons to stabilize in living this law. President Joseph Smith Jr. even blamed the Mormon expulsion from Missouri on his people’s failure to

live this law correctly. He wrote, “Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom” (D&C 105:3). This law was the law of consecration.

Once the Mormons settled in Utah, President Brigham Young’s administration instituted the United Orders policy, another communal experiment. The Mormons took control of all trade with the outside world, and even significant trade inside the Utah Territory. Brigham Young attempted to build the faith into “a single economic monolith” (Huff 5).

Just like in the early years, these ideas were ultimately unsuccessful, and began to fall apart as time passed. The main reason behind the failure of the order was the people’s inability to live the law. This law conflicted with the established American economic system. This caused both internal and external contentions to arise. Similar to the early communal ideas, misunderstanding and confusion led to its demise.

The outside world was aware of the Mormon separationist and communal ideas and feared what would happen if they worked. Two books that express these fears clearly are *Our County: Its Possible Future and its Present Crisis* by the Revered Josiah Strong published in 1885, and *The Mormon Problem* by Revered C.P. Lyford published in 1886. Both of these authors express their concerns about polygamy and condemn the practice. They then explain how their fear is rooted more in the political, economic and even social domination of the Mormon hierarchy.

Josiah Strong wrote if not polygamy, “What, then, is the real strength of Mormonism? It is ecclesiastical despotism which holds it together, unifies it, and makes it strong” (61). He continues, “Mormonism, therefore, is not simply a Church, but a state...ruled by a man who is prophet, priest, king and pope” (61). Lyford made the same

argument when he wrote, “Polygamy, dark, debasing, and unlawful as it is, is not the greatest evil or the chief difficulty in Utah” (11). He added, “Behind polygamy there is the Mormon creed a deadly menace to free government few suspect” (8). These authors claim that the desire for political power was the greatest threat Mormons offered to American society. These men and many like them believed Mormonism to be more than a religious threat; it was a political entity seeking to change the path of America through the strength of its western kingdom.

A pastor in Salt Lake named Walter M. Barrows argued that Utah was “the center of the New West,” destined to be “the commercial center of this vast region” (12). Having the economic center of the West controlled by Mormons was not ideal. Barrows’ article titled “The Mormon Problem” (1878) expresses the desire for more non-Mormon immigration to Utah (10). Bringing what he calls “Christian institutions” to Utah was his solution for halting the Mormon power monopoly (14).

Americans feared Mormon control not only in Utah, but throughout the entire western United States. Mormons were starting to spread across all the western territories forming colonies. By the end of the nineteenth century, Mormons controlled “one-sixth of the entire acreage between the Mississippi and Alaska” that was adequate for farming (Strong 64). The faith was gaining in numbers with thousands of converts arriving from Europe (64). Spreading these new arrivals all over the West into all these new colonies was the norm.

The fear of Mormon power was real for many reasons. Mormons had a very strong group-oriented mentality. They voted, worked, and worshiped as a group. Non-Mormons who lived in Utah in the late nineteenth century felt like they had no voice.

Mormonism also appeared to be spreading anti-American values all over the West. The Mormon faith was advocating values hostile to the dominant American system, like communal living and a theocratic government. Barrows wrote that Mormons must be shown their “errors before they will make good American citizens” (13). Mormon isolationism also raised questions about the faith’s intent. Regular Americans had no idea what was happening in the secluded western territories. Fear of the unknown caused widespread gossip and speculation.

The early Mormon polygamous, political, and communal experiments caused hostility and persecution from the outside world. Inside the faith, they caused disorder and instability. Such conflict and disorder, a common feature of the sects, characterized Mormonism throughout the nineteenth century. Mormonism was in a period of crisis; the faith needed to change in order to move forward. To overcome this crisis the Mormons had to completely transition into a fully denominational church.

JFS presided over Mormonism during one of the most important periods in its history. JFS’s administration ushered in changes that resulted in greater consensus and harmony with both members inside and non-members outside the faith. JFS played a key role in the evolution and transition that allowed Mormonism to move away from its sect like origins and continue on as an organized denominational style faith. Polygamy and power is how many defined the Mormon faith in the nineteenth century, but twentieth-century Mormonism would prove to be very different. Controversial ideas that were thought to be cornerstones of the faith were altered or eliminated altogether. These changes resulted in the forming of the Mormon denominational paradigm. They allowed the sect of Mormonism to be transformed into a modern denominational style Church.

## **II. The Right Leader for the Crisis**

In order for the new Mormon denominational paradigm to be established Mormonism needed to abandon many of its sect like characteristics, in particular, its isolationism and its teachings that were against the social, political, and economic norms of society. In addition to abandoning these ideas and features, Mormonism needed to adopt the characteristics of a denominational faith. This involved assimilating into the greater societies and building an organized educational structure for its members, just to name a few.

To make these changes Mormonism needed a leader prepared to move the faith in a new direction. The development of this Mormon denominational paradigm and identity required someone who understood the faith on all levels. At this crucial moment, Mormonism needed a leader raised in the faith, familiar with its past failures and triumphs, and charismatic enough to bring harmony and consensus. JFS would become this leader. Exploring JFS's early life shows how he was raised to fill this position in Mormonism.

JFS is a very complicated and often misunderstood figure in Mormon history. He had the privilege of being the leader of the Mormon people during a period of vast change and organization. Because of this he is often described as a great patriotic Mormon leader. He is also seen as a progressive leader openly looking to the future.

Other times he is described as a lying fundamentalist who did not want to abandon polygamy. Some even say JFS just happened to be the leader during this period of change, and made the changes that needed to be made to preserve the faith. On some level, all of these descriptions are correct. It is indisputable though that JFS's time as leader of the Mormon Church changed the faith forever, and sent it in a new direction with a new identity.

JFS was born on November 13, 1838 in Far West, Missouri. As a young child, JFS lived through the persecution in Illinois and Missouri and after the murders of his father, Hyrum Smith, and uncle, President Joseph Smith Jr., he traveled the long journey to Utah. He entered the Salt Lake Valley with his mother in the fall of 1848 at the age of nine. Without his father, he was forced "to labor as soon as he was able to assist" (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 157). His early life was filled with "trials and tribulations" so much so that he "came to look upon them as the ordinary events of life" (157). His ability to withstand trials and hardships would shape his style of leadership and understanding.

In early Mormonism nepotism was very common. Nearly every Mormon president in the early period had a son called to be an Apostle. Mormonism has a complete quorum of the Twelve Apostles, just like in the time of Christ. Behind the first presidency, the twelve are the highest governing body in the faith. Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff each called one of his sons into the Quorum of the Twelve while president. President Joseph Smith Jr.'s sons, however, were not a part of the Utah faith. They stayed behind in Illinois with their mother Emma Smith after their father's death. This meant the only true lineage President Smith had left in the faith came through his brother Hyrum's sons.

Hyrum Smith had two sons who lived to adulthood, John and Joseph (JFS).

Hyrum Smith and his lineage hold rights to a distinct office in the Mormonism priesthood, called Patriarch. Hyrum Smith's father, Joseph Smith Sr., was called as the first Mormon Patriarch. Upon his death, Hyrum took over the office of Patriarch, and it was designated that a direct descendant of Hyrum from that point forward would occupy this office. This is the only office in the Mormon priesthood that is filled by lineage. Hyrum's oldest son John Smith was always expected to fill this office, and did at the age of twenty two in February, 1855 (Bates and Smith 123). His appointment meant that JFS was the only direct descendant of President Joseph Smith Jr. left in the faith without a designated calling.

In Mormonism it is a custom for young people to receive a special blessing that supposedly reveals things about the recipient's life, such as the possibility of marriage and future leadership positions. This blessing is called a patriarchal blessing. It is given by a man who holds the office of Patriarch in the Mormon priesthood.<sup>2</sup> A patriarchal blessing is given to all members of the Mormon faith who are worthy and want to seek knowledge about the Lord's plan for their lives. Mormons believe that if the recipient is faithful to all the promises laid out in the blessing, it will be fulfilled.

As a young man JFS received his patriarchal blessing from his uncle John Smith who held the office of Church Patriarch at the time. JFS's patriarchal blessing shows the high expectations put upon him as young man. He was looked at, even from a young age,

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<sup>2</sup> In modern Mormonism, men not of the lineage of Hyrum Smith can hold the office of Patriarch, and are authorized to give blessings only in local congregations. The office of Presiding Patriarch over the whole Church is still exclusively held by the decedents of Hyrum Smith, though there is currently not a man active in this office.

as an important future figure in the faith. Because of his family heritage he was destined to become a future leader.

JFS's patriarchal blessing clearly spells out his destiny. The blessing states, "All things shall obey thy voice ... no power shall stay thy hand ... the mantle of thy father shall be upon thee ... your name shall be had in honorable remembrance among the saints forever." Some believe that the line "proven walls shall fall at thy rebuke" is a reference to him breaking down the cultural walls surrounding the Mormon people during his time as president of the faith (John Smith). JFS's blessing, from a Mormon perspective, revealed his future credentials as a leader.

In Mormonism, it is essential for members to study their blessings and try to live their lives in order to receive the promises laid in it. It is a guide, used to help members remain faithful. JFS once said, "I received my patriarchal blessing from the hands of [my] Uncle John just a little prior to his death, which I retain and which I cherish as a promise of blessings, of rewards through obedience and fidelity to the work of the Lord in which he and I have been engaged" (J.F. Smith, *Dedication*). JFS lived in order to have the blessings of his leadership fulfilled. He felt destined to fill an important role in the history of Mormonism. Nevertheless, this path to leadership had a rocky start.

In 1852, just a couple of months after JFS received his patriarchal blessing, Mary Fielding Smith, his mother, died leaving him orphaned. After the death of his mother, the expectations put upon him became much more difficult to live up to. For many years after the death of his mother, JFS lived life with a chip on his shoulder. During this period "he ran wild, without effective guidance or discipline," and even got into a fight with a teacher at school (Kenney 25). JFS characterized himself in this period saying, "I was

almost like a comet or fiery meteor, without attraction or gravitation to keep me balanced or guide me within reasonable bounds” (qtd. in Kenney 23).

Losing his father and his mother at such a young age left JFS with no real parental supervision. He began to guide his life as he saw fit. Many of his leaders and teachers felt he needed some direction if he was ever going to fulfill the promises in his patriarchal blessing. Two years after the death of his mother, JFS was sent on his first mission to the Hawaiian Islands at just fifteen years of age. The experiences and trials he had on his first mission would change him as a man forever. This mission would set him on the path to becoming the highest ranking leader in Mormonism.

While a missionary, JFS claimed to have a dream that he later declared “made me what I am” and “helped me out in every trial and through every difficulty” (qtd. in J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 446). An account of this dream is included in a biography written by JFS’s son, Joseph Fielding Smith, in 1939. This dream rivaled in importance his Patriarchal blessing as an indicator of his future positions in Mormon leadership. In this dream he had interactions with many former and current Mormon leaders, as well as his mother and father. These figures, most importantly Joseph Smith Jr., accept him as one of their own.

In this dream JFS experienced some kind of journey. In the beginning, he explains how he was in a rush thinking he might be late for something. The only thing he had with him was “a handkerchief with a small bundle wrapped in it”. He soon arrived at what he describes as a large “mansion” house and sees a sign that reads “bath,” he then entered and cleaned himself. He then opened the “little bundle” and saw it “was a pair of white, clean garments” (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 445). JFS likely interpreted this part of the

dream to represent his early life. He was a wayward boy before his mission. The hurrying and rushing he felt in the dream must have given him the feeling of being behind in some way. He needed to catch up to his true potential. In Mormonism white garments are a symbol of purity. When he put the garments on, he became a new person, clean from his past.

When young JFS arrived at the door of the mansion house the person who received him was President Joseph Smith Jr., who, JFS observed, “looked at me a little reprovingly.” He then proclaimed, “Joseph, you are late.” JFS replied with assurance saying, “Yes, but I am clean—I am clean.” President Smith quickly pulled him in the house. Once in the house he said, “I saw my father [Hyrum Smith], and Brigham [Young], and Heber [C. Kimball], and Willard [Richards], and other good men that I had known, standing in a row ... My mother was there...and I could name over as many as I remember of their names, who sat there, who seemed to be among the chosen, among the exalted” (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 445-446).

The next morning JFS felt a change in himself. He said, “When I awoke that morning I was a man ... there was not anything in the world that I feared” (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 446). He had entered a new phase in his life. He was a changed man, born again in the faith. When he said to his Uncle Joseph “I’m clean,” he may have been telling himself, I might not have been a fabulous kid, but I am doing what is right now. I am starting life over again.

This dream helped JFS build confidence in himself and his abilities as a leader. In the dream he was pulled into a room full of famous Mormon leaders. When he entered this room, he knew he wanted to become like the people he describes as “the exalted.”

JFS now felt he was accepted by these previous leaders; he was a part of them. In many ways his destiny is revealed to him. The path to leadership was now laid out before him. This path was made clear to him when he was accepted by the previous leadership of the faith in this dream. This dream helped him see his “duty” and influenced nearly all the decisions he would make in life from here on out (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 446-447).

Much like his uncle before him, JFS claimed to have had a remarkable spiritual vision at a young age that put him on a path to leadership. He even saw his uncle in this vision. The connection and similarities between JFS and his uncle President Joseph Smith Jr. are very strong. As JFS became more mature, he continued to look to his uncle as a source of inspiration in his life. He even spoke of his gratitude toward his uncle for the things he did. In a conference in 1916 he said, “We are indebted...to the Prophet Joseph Smith as the instrument in the hands of God, for the knowledge we now possess” (J.F. Smith, “Opening” *Eighty Seventh* 3).

JFS began to assume this leadership role while a missionary in Hawaii. He became president of the Maui-Molokai conference making him the leader of 1,253 Mormons and forty-one branches of the faith in Hawaii (Kenney 25). He gained vital experience as a leader on his mission, but did not always see success. During a five-month period “he and his companion baptized three and excommunicated thirty-six” (Kenney 26). Though it was hard at times, his first mission to Hawaii set the tone for who he would become. He learned to adapt to his surroundings. He left a boy, but came home a man.

Throughout his life, JFS served many full time missions. He served three times to Hawaii, twice to Great Britain, as well as other small assignments (Gibbons 27, 47, 133).

These missions provided him with opportunities for maturing through leadership and life experience. JFS's missionary service defined him and instilled in him a deep devotion to the Mormon cause.

JFS was eventually called home from his first Hawaii mission and sent to join the Mormon legion in the short-lived Utah War, an incident where the United States Government sent troops to the Utah territory to stop a non-existent rebellion. During this conflict, JFS was one of the remaining legionaries in Salt Lake City, which was deserted when U.S. Army troops passed through it (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 195). JFS had twice in his life seen his home city entered by a hostile force. In Nauvoo as a small child he could recall the alarm being sent out saying, "Get out of the city ... the mob is upon us!" (J. F. Smith, "Boyhood" 58). JFS also remembered hearing "the bombardment that was carried on by the mob" in the city of Nauvoo when they forced the Mormons out of Illinois (58). He recalled sitting on the bank of the river looking across at his old home "expecting every moment that a cannon ball would come across the river" and feared being "murdered right there on the banks" (58).

JFS's time in the legion only deepened his commitment to the faith. He went from preaching the faith as a missionary, to defending it with force, if necessary, in the legion. He was no longer the wild young man of his youth. He was now a grown man, ready to help lead Mormonism in any way he could.

JFS eventually went to work in the Historian's Office in Salt Lake City, along with his much older cousin George Albert Smith. George Albert was an Apostle at this time, and had a very deep knowledge of the history of Mormonism. Having been a part of the faith from almost the very beginning made him a "veritable walking encyclopedia of

Church facts, doctrines and procedures” (Gibbons 81). George Albert also used this opportunity to teach the young JFS “the arts of study and composition” (82). JFS had very little proper education. His time working in the historian’s office proved very important in his progression into higher leadership positions.

Reading and studying actual documents from early Mormonism gave JFS an added measure of understanding, rivaled by almost none of his colleagues. It was not that others could not read the documents; JFS just worked with and studied them every day while working in the Historian’s Office. His access gave him a better understanding, which would prove a vital tool as he progressed through the Mormon ranks.

During this time JFS would also serve as a secretary for the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency from time to time. He was able to work side by side with some of the most important men in Mormonism. The opportunities JFS had to mingle with the highest leaders of the faith “provided him with a broad education in Church doctrine, procedure, and leadership” (Gibbons 82).

In 1866, at just twenty-seven years of age, JFS was ordained an Apostle by Brigham Young and served as one of his “special additional counselors” in the First Presidency (Cowan 45). He would take his position in the Quorum of the Twelve a year later after the death of one of its members (45). As stated before, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stands as the second highest governing body in the Mormon faith, just after the First Presidency. Members of both governing bodies must be first ordained to the priesthood office of Apostle. To be called as an Apostle in the Mormon faith is very rare, but to become an Apostle and be put directly in the First Presidency is nearly impossible.

JFS also during this time built a family fitting for a Mormon leader. He was a practicing polygamist having six wives, though one eventually left him (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 231). Nearly every important leader in Mormonism in the nineteenth century was a polygamist, including every president. He fathered forty-three children and adopted an additional five. He had his first child in 1867 and his last in 1906, well after the Manifesto (487-490).

Because of his polygamist lifestyle, JFS was forced to live in hiding from 1884 to 1891. At this time many Mormon leaders were arrested for practicing polygamy and sent to prison. This forced many well-known Mormon leaders into hiding. While hiding JFS served the faith's "outlying settlements" and even represented Mormonism at a meeting in Washington D.C. (Cowan 45). JFS did not officially come out of hiding until the government gave a "proclamation of amnesty" to all pre-manifesto polygamists in 1891 (46).

In 1901, JFS became President of the Mormon faith. JFS was the first president born into Mormonism, the first raised in the faith. He had a complete identity as a Mormon. The fact that JFS was a second generation Mormon is very important when looking at the theory of the sect to the denominational church. Niebuhr states that, "By its very nature the sectarian type of organization is valid only for one generation" (19). The nature of sectarian church does not carry through over generations. The second generation either helps it evolve or it just slowly falls into nonexistence.

Niebuhr also states that, "Rarely does a second generation hold the convictions it has inherited with a fervor equal to that of its fathers, who fashioned these convictions in the heat of conflict and at the risk of martyrdom" (20). This is not to say that JFS lacked

commitment to the Mormon cause, though he was not a part of the initial spiritual awaking and fervor. Persecution and continual missionary work helped keep some the religious fervor alive, but also helped keep the faith in constant turmoil. JFS had an intense commitment to his faith forged in the crucible of persecution, but also had the firmly established identity of a second generation Mormon. JFS had sufficient distance from the founding to let go of what was keeping the faith in crisis and disorganization, and to forge a new identity.

His presidency was a time of great expansion, construction, and organization. He thrived on order and “nothing seemed to bring a greater annoyance to him than disorder” (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 443). He was “clean and neat” and “methodical in everything that he did” (442). When JFS became president he strove to bring order to all the confusion surrounding the Mormon faith.

JFS was the first modern Mormon leader. His Presidency defined what it meant to be a Mormon. Polygamy, political isolation, and theological confusion would all be eliminated during the JFS administration. Mormonism was distinctly different after his presidency. It developed into a more recognizable and respected religion. JFS helped lead Mormonism out of the west and into the world.

JFS’s Presidency stands out over his predecessors’ as a decisive transitional point in the Church’s history. His uncle, President Joseph Smith Jr., was the founder of Mormonism and laid out its principles. Brigham Young saved the faith after the death of Joseph Smith Jr. and established it in the West. JFS took all that came before him and molded it into a coherent religious system. During his time as president, he began a

concentrated effort to organize the Mormon denominational paradigm giving the faith a stable platform and identity.

### **III. Assimilation and Americanization**

Building the Mormon denominational paradigm required a consensus of ideologies. The ideology of a given group of people is set by its leaders and teachers. JFS understood this and spent his whole presidency establishing a unified social, political, and economic ideology for his people. These ideas would shape the new modern Mormon stereotype – the unapologetic, patriotic, American Mormon.

Many nineteenth-century Mormon political and even social ideas had to be changed in order for the faith to truly have a consensus ideology. Kuhn has stated, “After the pre-paradigm period the assimilation of all new theories and of almost all new sorts of phenomena has in fact demanded the destruction of a prior paradigm” (96). Kuhn is saying that once a theory enters the period of normal science, there is no room for any of the previous theories and ideas. A complete destruction of these theories and ideas is necessary for the new paradigm to be accepted by all.

In Mormonism the complete destruction of polygamy and the independent kingdom became necessary for the faith’s future growth and continuation. Niebuhr points out, “As generation succeeds generation, the isolation of the community from the world becomes more difficult” (20). The pressure for conformity from the United States government forced Mormon social and political isolation to come to an end.

The Manifesto ending polygamy and Utah statehood all but ended the Mormon goal of building a separate kingdom in the West. Statehood brought more stability to Utah, but more scrutiny to the faith. The Mormons were now being watched even closer, by both the government and public. Most of the media attention at the time was given to polygamy and its demise. As one historian noted, “Polygamy died with a bang, the political kingdom of God with a whimper” (Hansen, “Metamorphosis” 222). Polygamy was associated so much with Mormonism that it provided an even larger obstacle for assimilation than many of their utopian and communal ideals did. That is why the ending of polygamy played such an important role in the building of this modern Mormon ideology at the turn of the twentieth century.

When JFS became president, the polygamy issue was still being sorted out. Confusion from both inside and outside the faith over the future of the practice was proof that the issue needed to be addressed. Polygamy would officially come to an end as a direct result of the election of Apostle Reed Smoot to the U.S. Senate. Following this election, the senate held a hearing with the intent of blocking Smoot from taking his elected seat. This case was similar to the B.H. Roberts case, a Mormon leader previously blocked from taking an elected office due to polygamy accusation, a decade earlier. The major difference between Smoot and B.H. Roberts, was that Reed Smoot was not a polygamist.

Smoot was not put under investigation over polygamy, but over his leadership in the faith. The Government wanted to know if he would obey and follow the U.S. Constitution over the will of his fellow Mormon leaders, namely JFS as the president. The government then called for a hearing to find out Smoot’s stance. This hearing would

turn from an interrogation of Smoot to an open critique of the Mormon faith. This led the prosecution to attack the faith on its still lingering polygamy problem. Polygamy and Mormon loyalty were at the heart of this hearing. This hearing would prove vital in the assimilation of Mormonism into the greater American ideology.

The hearing began in 1904, and judgment was not rendered until 1907. The hearing was a long and tedious process. Many people inside Utah, Mormon or not, became upset with Smoot “for bringing unwanted attention to the church and to Utah” (Flake 51). The people in Utah did not want any more government interference in their lives. JFS took a different stance, and openly backed Smoot in his bid for the senate. He realized this could be an important opportunity to clear up misconceptions about the faith and Utah. JFS once said, “Let the investigation come; we have been trying to preach our faith for seventy years and do not now shrink from telling a congressional committee what we believe and what we have done” (Paulos 19).

Of the nine Apostles called to the hearings to testify, only three went: JFS, his son Hyrum Smith and Frances M. Lyman. All the others fled or claimed to be too sick to attend, although one of the ill Apostles would testify at a later time (Flake 53). JFS was even cross examined during the proceedings.

In his cross examination, JFS admitted to cohabiting with his wives after the Manifesto, but maintained that he had not married any more wives. He made the case that it would be wrong of him to turn his back on the family commitments he had already made. He stated in the hearing, “I had a plural family ... I simply took my chances preferring ... the consequences of the law rather than abandon my family” (Paulos 52-53). He continued, “I have cohabitated with my wives not openly, that is, not in a manner

that I thought would be offensive ... but I have acknowledged them; I have visited them. They have borne me children” (52-53). He then makes “a distinction between unlawful cohabitation and polygamy,” making sure they know he is not adding new wives, just not abandoning the ones he has (53-54).

JFS did, in fact, get in trouble for cohabitation near the beginning of his presidency, and had to pay a fine. He did also father multiple children after the Manifesto, but did not add any new wives and stayed true to the position expressed in the Manifesto (Flake 188). JFS’s openness and honesty gained him some support and sympathy from some government officials. His testimony in many ways humanized him, and helped people see his commitment to his family.

Although JFS did not take any new wives after the Manifesto, many have debated whether he allowed others to take new wives. Polygamy in Mormonism after the Manifesto is indisputable. It did happen, but how much knowledge the president had of these ceremonies is unclear. Speculation varies from total ignorance of the practice to him performing some of the ceremonies himself. There is no doubt JFS was sympathetic to the polygamy question, being a polygamist himself, and knowing his stance on cohabitation. There is evidence to support that he did know and did authorize, on some level, polygamous marriages during his presidency.<sup>3</sup> In this case, JFS seemed to take a similar stance to his Uncle President Joseph Smith Jr. in the 1830s. Allow the practice, but deny it at the same time. Nevertheless, he did put an official end to polygamy once and for all. JFS may have struggled at times with the ending of polygamy, but when the time came he did what was necessary, and moved Mormonism forward.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information read, Quinn "LDS Church Authority."

In the end, the prosecution discovered that polygamous marriages were being performed. It was also discovered that these marriages were being officiated by high ranking Mormon leaders. The two main offenders were two Apostles who had been summoned to speak at the hearings but did not attend. These men were John W. Taylor and Matthias F Cowley (Flake 92). The fact that these men were Apostles, one of the highest rankings in Mormon leadership, made it seem like plural marriage was still accepted in Mormonism. The offending Apostles were later dealt with by JFS and his counselors in the First Presidency.

John W. Taylor was excommunicated, while Matthias F. Crowley was disfellowshipped, effectively removing his priesthood and his apostleship without throwing him out of faith entirely (J. Anderson 66). Dissention and misunderstanding lingered after the dismissal of these leaders, but the faith moved forward. Crowley and Taylor were seen by some as a means to an end. Someone had to be punished to appease the government and show that Mormonism was serious about ending polygamy. The dismissal of Matthias F. Crowley and John W. Taylor left two vacant spots in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. JFS filled these spots with two very different and progressive men, Orson F. Whitney and David O. McKay. Whitney was a church historian. McKay would have a long career as a leader in the faith. McKay would later become one of the most progressive presidents in Mormon history (Whitney 262-263).

During the hearings, Senator Smoot conveyed to JFS “the immense distrust felt by national leaders concerning Mormon honesty,” since some of the polygamy accusation ended up being true (Hardy 373). JFS wanted to do something to ease these worries. He wanted the government to see that the faith was serious about ending this practice for

good. This led JFS to give what has become known as the Second Manifesto in 1904. This Manifesto stated that all who “enter into any such marriages he will be deemed in transgression against the Church and will be liable to be dealt with, according to the rules and regulations thereof, and excommunicated therefrom” (J.F. Smith, “Official Statement” 75).

JFS restated his stance in 1910 with a letter to all regional and local leadership. This letter reinforced his stance on polygamy saying, “The attitude of the Church is the same today” as it was in 1904 (Clark, *Messages* 4: 218). JFS used his leadership to end the practice of polygamy for good. He knew that the government would no longer tolerate any more deception. He ended the internal turmoil over the practice, and nullified the external persecution as well.

These hearings brought the polygamy problem out into the open for all to see. They clarified the situation for all parties, and helped bring the faith in line with the law. These hearings also helped the Mormon leadership see the importance of further assimilation into mainstream American religious culture. JFS knew the problem was secrecy and hiding. The more the Mormons tried to hide the bigger the problem became. This hearing was an opportunity for the faith to come out and show the world that Mormons don’t have horns, they are just like everyone else.

Reed Smoot would in time take his seat in the Senate, and would go on to have a long career helping to bridge more gaps between the Mormons and the rest of the country. The Reed Smoot hearings were an important milestone in the history of Mormon ideological and political assimilation. These hearings were a success and a failure for the faith. The hearings exposed Mormonism to a large amount of criticism and slander.

Smoot would have a large influence on politics in Utah among the Mormons, and would be a great example of a Mormon to the people in Washington. After these hearings, the Mormon hierarchy began to guide their people to assimilate into American political culture even more.

As citizens of the state of Utah, not members of a separate kingdom, Mormons had to embrace American political culture. In the early years, the Mormons did not have a clear political position. The members would mostly vote as a bloc (Arrington and Bitton 50). They did not support just one party, they voted for whichever party they felt supported them the most. President Joseph Smith Jr. once said, “They are both alike to us; but we shall go for our friends” (qtd. in Bitton 51). In the mid-nineteenth century the Mormons tried to form their own political party called the People’s Party, which was officially dissolved in 1891 (Arrington and Bitton 247). Assimilation called for the Mormon people to become a part of the recognized American party system, abandoning anything they had tried before

Mormon political assimilation can trace its beginnings to the early 1890s, well before the Smoot hearings. Leaders, including JFS, had started pushing the Mormon people toward American political culture. In the 1890s, the leadership began to see the need to break the people up into nationally recognized parties. Once this assimilation began there were an “overwhelming number of Mormons in the Democratic Party” (Alexander, *Transition* 37). Being a Democrat made sense for most Mormons at the turn of the twentieth century. This was due to the fact that the Democrats had exhibited more compassion toward the Mormons during their many trials. It was after all the Republicans making the biggest strides against the faith during the polygamy years. Many Mormon

leaders feared that once the members had assimilated into the American political system everyone would join the Democratic Party due to their history with the Republicans. This allegiance would make this party look like a new Mormon party. Mormon leaders began to ask people to join the Republican Party to add a better political balance to the young state (Arrington and Bitton 247).

It is important to note that many Mormon leaders during this time were Republican, including JFS and Reed Smoot, though many of the members were Democrats. The Republican Party was in power around the turn of the twentieth century and “the Church needed friends in that party to ... avoid disaster in Utah” (Church Education 439). Disaster would mean any kind of further attacks and inquiries after Utah became a state. The Republican Party also had a level of prestige and wealth associated with it that appealed to the Mormon leadership. In time, the Republican Party would become a “hallmark of early twentieth century Mormon Leadership” (Alexander, *Transition* 37).

JFS and Reed Smoot were the leading Republicans in the faith. JFS did openly endorse candidates, unlike the current Mormon leadership. The difference between JFS and the leaders that came before him was the fact that he endorsed these candidates as JFS, not as the Mormon President. His zeal for the political process sometimes made this stance confusing to people; in 1912, for example, he issued a statement endorsing the campaign of William Howard Taft in the Mormon-run magazine, *The Improvement Era* (J.F. Smith, “Presidential” 1120). His stance on the subject was made clear when he said, “The Church does not engage in politics; its members belong to the political parties at their own pleasure--to the Republicans, the Democrats, or to no party at all. They are not

asked, much less required, to vote this way or that” (J.F. Smith, “Probable” 626). His stance on political parties would be the direction the faith would take for the rest of the twentieth century and beyond.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the Mormons were not only starting to assimilate into American political culture, but also beginning the process of reconciliation with the country. If a group wants to be a part of a society that has wronged them in the past, it must forgive and let go of the past. To move the faith forward, JFS and his counselors started to teach forgiveness. He once said, “We carry to the world the olive branch of peace . . . the spirit of forgiveness pervades the hearts of the Saints of God, and they do not cherish a desire or feeling of revenge toward their enemies” (J.F. Smith, “Opening” *Seventy-Second* 2). The Mormon people needed to let go of any of the resentments and animosities that remained from their past, and move on.

JFS became a key figure in the new push for forgiveness and moving forward. JFS once said he was “convinced in my own mind that there is not another nation upon the face of the globe where the Lord Almighty could have established His Church with so little difficulty and opposition as He has done here in these United States” ( J.F. Smith, “Opening” *Seventy Fifth* 6). JFS even taught that the country as a whole had nothing to do with the persecution the Mormons endured but that “assorted unprincipled people denied the Saints their rights” (Yorgason 139). No longer was it time to preach about past turmoil and stirrup grievances. The people were starting to prosper, and persecution, on a large scale, was becoming a thing of the past. JFS and other Mormon leaders wanted their people to believe “the country had progressed, and the time for struggling had passed; Mormons should feel blessed for the freedoms they now enjoy” (140). This type of

speech is still used in Mormonism today. Rarely is there a discourse by a high ranking leader about patriotism where a similar sentiment is not heard.

In a sense, JFS's stance on forgiveness makes him look more like an apologist for the United States Government, rather than the Mormon faith. He never said the faith was wrong, nor did he say that the Mormons had not been wronged; he just put the blame elsewhere. He described persecution as the work of misled individuals who had wronged them and not the federal government or the country as a whole. JFS once said, "I hope with all my soul that the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be loyal in their very hearts and souls, to the principles of the Constitution of our country. From them, we have derived the liberty that we enjoy" (*Gospel Doctrine* 408).

Perhaps the biggest political achievement of this era was Mormonism's growing friendship with the U.S. presidency. The relationship between the Mormon people and the president of the United States was the strongest it had ever been during the early years of the JFS administration. Theodore Roosevelt, the president at the time, had a very strong connection with the faith and could even be seen as an advocate on its behalf.

In 1903, President Roosevelt visited Utah. He spoke in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, addressing the people as "my fellow Americans" (Roosevelt, "Addresses" 217). Just a little over a decade before this speech the Mormons were disenfranchised. Now, for the first time, a United States president was speaking to them in their building, in their city (Winder 184). He complimented the people on how they developed the desert and did not "exploit the land" and its resources (Roosevelt, "Addresses" 217). He said the Mormons had "literally made the wilderness blossom as the rose" (217). One of JFS's

apostles said in a conference in 1905, “We believe that in President Roosevelt we have an unprejudiced friend ... a man who has the courage of his convictions (H.M. Smith 49).

Roosevelt’s backing during the Reed Smoot hearings was a huge resource to the Mormon cause. He once said of Reed Smoot, “If he had obeyed the law and was an upright and reputable man in his public and private relations, it would be an outrage to turn him out because of his religious belief” (Roosevelt, “Mr. Roosevelt” 717). Senator Smoot’s daughter was once in attendance at an event held in the White House after the hearings had ended. As soon as President Roosevelt “heard the name Smoot he held up the line, and then informed them that he was responsible for the favorable vote” during the hearing (Merrill 83). The president later told her, “He had the highest regard for her father” (83). President Roosevelt defended the Mormons openly, and had a good relationship with both JFS and Senator Smoot.

The election of President William Howard Taft strengthened the Mormon relationship with the United States presidency even more. His presidency was a time of goodwill between Mormonism and the Government. Taft visited Utah six times. JFS became the first Mormon president to visit the White House since President Joseph Smith Jr., by personal invitation from President Taft. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir also visited the White House for the first time during Taft’s administration (Winder 199). Taft also had a very good relationship with Reed Smoot, much the same way that Roosevelt did because “their views on almost all subjects coincided” (Heath 3). Smoot was often invited to dinner and meetings at the White House (21). This raised the Mormon profile in the eyes of the U.S. Government, and its people. This is a clear expression of Mormon assimilation. Not many previous U.S. presidents’ views would have coincided so closely

with a Mormon Apostle, nor would they have been so open and friendly with one another.

The modern Mormon Church has had a relationship with all the U.S. presidents since the turn of the twentieth century. Though some were more sympathetic than others to Mormon beliefs, the days of misunderstanding and mistreatment were over. The Mormon embrace, led by JFS, of mainstream American political culture was a clear sign of the faith's move toward the mainstream.

Another key part of Mormon assimilation was the embracing of the American economic system. This involved the abandonment of any communal utopian ideas, and the further separation of the faith from many of the political and economic affairs of the region. Because of these efforts, the beginning of the JFS administration saw the faith step away from many of its business affairs (Yorgason 78). The idea of selling off Mormon owned businesses started directly before JFS with the Lorenzo Snow Presidency, with a focus on debt relief (Arrington, *Great Basin* 406). This work continued during the JFS administration, with the new emphasis on lowering Mormonism's business responsibilities and profile.

In the United States, mixing religion, politics, and business are against the norm. These parts of life exist separately to most people. To the nineteenth-century Mormon these parts were mixed together, and in many ways worked inseparably. The Mormon faith was the most powerful organization in the mountain west. The fear of a monopoly was real. The Mormons controlled a large percentage of the economy in this region due to their size and power. Mormon scholar John Henry Evans once said that from the

beginning Mormonism “was not to be a Church, a religion, or a sect, but a complete society” (qtd. in Vetterli 47).

The Mormon economic, religious, and political monopoly in the nineteenth century was threatening to the larger American society. American Protestants were hostile to this sort of institutional structure. To many the Mormon Kingdom began to look like Rome. Josiah Strong, a well-known Protestant clergyman and author, described the Mormon president as, “Prophet, priest, king and pope, all in one” (61). For full assimilation into the rest of the American cultural world, the secular and the spiritual needed to be separated.

Mormons did have control over many of the business enterprises in Utah in the nineteenth century. They were not afraid to build “Church Monopolies and drive out gentile competition” (Heinerman and Shupe 17). They developed many “vertical” enterprises, where they controlled “all stages of production, from purchasing raw materials to merchandising” (10). These business practices marked the faith as being anti-American and anti-free market. Near the end of the nineteenth century, things started to change. The Mormon leadership started to advocate for a more open market in Utah.

During the Reed Smoot Senate hearings, the idea of the Mormons being anti-American was promoted all over the country. JFS felt so much “pressure for conformity” from the outside world that when it came to social and economic norms he “undertook to get the church out of business” (Arrington, *Great Basin* 406). Near the end of the hearings, JFS could certify “that the Church did not hold a controlling stock interest in any corporation but the Salt Lake Theater” (406). The Mormon hierarchy sold off the faith’s interests in companies like the Utah Sugar Company, Saltair Properties, Utah

Light and Railway Company and many others (407-408). Speaking about the Utah Light and Railway Company, JFS said, “The separation of business from religion was the main reason for the sale” (Alexander, *Transition* 89). This was the final death knell to the independent kingdom Mormons had been building since they arrived over a half-century before.

It is important to note, Mormonism did not get completely out of the business world, but just lessened its hold. In fact, the modern Mormon Church holds stock in many businesses. The main difference between the turn of the twentieth century and now is that Mormonism “and its leaders ever more successfully played by capitalist rules” (Yorgason 201). The Mormon Church now stands as a beacon of capitalism. Mormonism’s embrace of the American economic system stands out as one of the more open examples of its conformity in the early twentieth century. JFS was forced to have a more defined separation of economic affairs and church affairs, while still allowing for some minor overlap. This adjustment helped create the paradigm many have of the capitalistic-enterprising Mormon, even among Mormons.

JFS played a key role in the changing perception of Mormons as anti-American and communal, to capitalistic and patriotic. Mormonism was now in line with the country on family values with the ending of polygamy, and political values with the ending of the separate kingdom. Mormonism also accepted mainstream economic values with the ending of its communal practices and the embracing of capitalistic ideas.

After JFS’s administration Mormonism had fully developed its denominational paradigm. The Mormons were no longer isolated from the country and the country was no longer hostile toward the Mormons. The faith was now looking to reduce hostility and

integrate ideas. Assimilation would continue for the rest of the twentieth century as Mormonism would continue to grow larger and spread out all across America.

#### **IV. Theological Transformation**

President Joseph Smith Jr. was the author of nearly all of the doctrinal tenets of the Mormon faith. After his death, the best way to teach, understand and utilize many of these doctrines was left up to interpretation. Throughout the nineteenth century many interpreters of doctrine competed for dominance. This confusion was caused by the lack of clarification, consensus and instruction among the Mormon leadership about many of the faith's theological beliefs. During the pre-paradigm sect phase a group's concern is not with the written expression of doctrine as much as survival and evangelism. Sects prefer preparing for the end of world, not for the future. Mormonism was now changing its focus from waiting for the end of times, to preparing for the future.

Kuhn states that during the pre-paradigm period, scientists who encounter "the same range of phenomena, but not usually all the same particular phenomena" will often "describe and interpret them in different ways" (17). Scientists will often come up with different ideas and theories, even when studying relatively the same things. Eventually this divergence will go away, and its departure "is usually caused by the triumph of one of the pre-paradigm schools" (17). Triumph comes when the majority agree on the new paradigm. Once in agreement, these new ideas are passed down in the agreed upon way to the rest of the group. Mormon leaders in the nineteenth century were all studying the

same principles, coming across the same ideas, but struggled on how to teach them and implement them.

Mormonism was at this time still transitioning from a sect to a denominational church. During this transition, “Creeds, whether written or unwritten, become increasingly important as symbols of social unity and social differentiation” (Niebuhr 182). Creeds are the establishment of set beliefs and rituals. Creeds are important for denominational churches to establish unity within, and to differentiate themselves from other denominations. Mormonism needed to clarify its beliefs by establishing set creeds, stating this is our belief in this principle and there will be no more disputation.

The abandonment of polygamy at the turn of the twentieth century left the door open for a period of organization and clarification that had never taken place before. Once polygamy was gone, the Mormons lost a core doctrinal belief, as well as one of the more idiosyncratic symbols of the faith. Mormonism needed to fill the void created by the ending of polygamy (Flake 118). To fill this void Mormonism needed to clarify many of its other principles. It needed to tell the people polygamy is gone, this is what we believe now, and this is how we believe it.

Filling this void would prove to be difficult. Most Mormons in the nineteenth century associated polygamy with redemption; therefore, taking it away was not just against their social norms, but against the Mormon view of the eternities (Alexander, *Transition* 11). Brigham Young once said, “The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy” (“Beneficial Effects” 269).

Confusion over the Mormon marriage system can be traced back to the revelation given by President Joseph Smith Jr. about polygamy. In it, President Smith discusses

polygamy and eternal marriage together as if they are the same thing. He explains how David and Abraham had multiple wives. He explains that because God commanded the biblical patriarchs to take these wives by the authority of the priesthood it was not a sin (D&C: 132). When this revelation became a canonized section of the Doctrine and Covenants and was accepted as scripture in 1876, it connected polygamy to Mormonism forever. In Mormonism eternal marriage is required for salvation. In the nineteenth century polygamy was viewed as the most important form of eternal marriage; this interpretation had to end.

Marriage, plural or not, is a key component of Mormon salvation. Mormons must be sealed—married—by someone holding the Mormon priesthood, in a Mormon temple, in order to reach the highest level of salvation. This practice is called eternal marriage, or being sealed together for time as well as eternity. Mormon leaders needed to let their people know that a monogamous sealing was just as important as a polygamous one. They also needed to let the world know that monogamous marriages and sealings were the only marriages taking place in Mormon temples, not polygamous ones.

Even after polygamy was officially ended, statements from the turn of the century officially separating plural marriage and eternal marriage were hard to find. In 1907, JFS and his counselors made a statement in response to accusations that Mormonism was destroying the sacred nature of marriage. They said, “On the contrary it regards the lawful union of man and woman as the means through which they may realize their highest and holiest aspirations” (Presidency, “An Address” 7). This statement still leaves room for interpretation, but makes it clear that marriage is between a man and one woman, not women. A clearer statement was not given until decades later.

In 1933, JFS's successor Heber J. Grant and his counselors issued a statement on marriage: "Celestial marriage—that is, marriage for time and eternity—and polygamous or plural marriage are not synonymous terms. Monogamous marriages for time and eternity, solemnized in our temples in accordance with the word of the Lord and the laws of the Church, are Celestial marriages"(Clark, *Messages* 5:329). This is the modern Mormon view of marriage.

The Mormon marriage system became the first principle to be redefined during this period of clarification. Polygamy was one of the defining characteristics of Mormonism for nearly half a century. Polygamy gave the faith a sense of distinction from many other movements. Though the Mormons were assimilating with the rest of the religious world they still wanted to be different and stand out. Once polygamy was abandoned, other principles and doctrines were raised in importance, like monogamous marriage, to fill the hole left by the ending of the practice. These principles would build the sense of peculiarity Mormonism craved.

This period of refocusing also gave Mormon leaders a chance to build the theological foundation that Mormonism had lacked for so long. For decades, Mormonism functioned without having all of their principles and doctrines formulated into an easy to understand system. No manuals had ever been published clarifying the principles and their meanings. The leaders at the turn of the century systemized and standardized the faith's theology for the first time and constructed a solid foundation.

This new systemizing would include clarifications on the nature of God and man. Who is God and what is our connection to him? To help answer this question a deeper importance and attention was also given to the First Vision, the event at which God and

Christ first appeared to a young Joseph Smith Jr. In addition, the Word of Wisdom, the Mormon law of health was defined, for the first time. JFS was also instrumental in writing Mormonism's first real manual of theology known as *Gospel Doctrine*.

JFS was an essential force in establishing what principles would become the defining doctrines of the Mormon faith for future generations. The Mormon faith is built on the idea of modern revelation. Mormons believe that their prophet and apostles receive direction from God through direct revelation and communication. JFS, as the prophet and president, held this authority to receive direction from God for the faith. JFS used history, tying his view to former leaders, and this authority to lend credibility to the changes he was making in the eyes of his people.

### **The Nature of God, Man and the First Vision**

Clarifying the Mormon view of God was necessary to establish the Mormon denominational paradigm. JFS and his fellow leaders did not want any confusion over their beliefs. Until this point in the history of Mormonism, many of its deeper doctrinal and even some more common theological concepts were not standardized among the main body of the faith. Since no manual of theology had ever been written or compiled, instruction was only given at conferences and in written talks and lectures. There was also the occasional book or pamphlet, but no real collection of systematic Mormon theology had been compiled.

Until the turn of the twentieth century, the Mormon people had to speculate on what was the true doctrine if it was not specific in the scriptures. Mormonism was a new sect. Like in many other new sects, the Mormon people were confused over the

interpretation and implementation of many the faith's new doctrines. There were no real foundations for some of these new beliefs and practices. Mormonism was in need of greater doctrinal clarify.

One of JFS's counselors, Charles Penrose, while speaking in a conference in April 1916, expressed his regret for the lack of doctrinal clarity in the faith. Both Charles Penrose and JFS gave talks on the nature of God and the Godhead at this conference. Penrose said, "I am sorry that has not been rectified long ago, because plain answers have been given to brethren and sisters who write and desire to know about it, and yet it still lingers, and contentions arise in regard to it" (17). The leadership began to understand that there was a disconnection between their people and a proper understanding of the doctrines of the faith. Further clarification and education was needed.

The process of educating the members started with the issuing of doctrinal clarifications. Every systematic theology begins by defining the nature of God. This led JFS and his First Presidency to issue two important doctrinal clarifications relating to the nature of God titled, "The Father and the Son" and "The Origin of Man."

The First Presidency understood there was confusion over the many Biblical, and even some Book of Mormon accounts, in relation to the nature of God, which appear to support monotheism. Many Mormons, as well as people outside the faith, were confused over the differences between Jesus Christ and God the Father in these scriptural accounts. Confusion over the nature of God and Christ was not just in Mormonism, but throughout Christianity around the turn of the twentieth century. In 1916, just a couple of months after Charles Penrose's comments, the First Presidency of the Mormon faith issued a statement to clarify their beliefs called "The Father and the Son."

The Mormon view of God is distinctly different from nearly all other Christian faiths. JFS and his fellow leaders felt the need to define their belief in God not only for the members to understand, but for the world as well. Mormons believe that the Godhead --God the Father, Christ and the Holy Ghost--are all three distinct individual beings. God and Christ are believed to have individual resurrected bodies, while the Holy Ghost does not.

In “The Father and the Son” JFS and his fellow leaders break down the scriptural references that define both beings. This proclamation describes God the Father as our “literal parent” the “father of [the] spirits” of mankind (Presidency, “Father” 934). When Christ is called father, it is in the symbolic sense because he helped God in the creation, making his creations “eternal” as well (935). Christ is also called the father because those that believe in his teachings become his children in the gospel and “heirs of eternal life” (936). Most importantly, this proclamation clarifies a key distinguishing belief of Mormonism, that Jesus Christ and God the Father are two separate beings. Clarifying this view of the nature of God was an important step toward a greater denominational church structure. This gave the faith a much needed foundation to move forward.

The nature of God was not only thing being debated at the turn of twentieth century. The nature of man was also being questioned. Evolution was a hot button issue during this time period. In 1909 the Mormon leadership issued a statement called “The Origin of Man.” This document clarified the Mormon view of evolution. The arguments used to debate evolution in this document relate to the nature of God.

Mormonism’s stance is that “the creation is two-fold firstly spiritual, secondly temporal” (Presidency, “Origin” 76-77). This statement means that God created human

spirits before he created humans in the flesh (76-77). It also references the Bible with Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female he created them.” It references The Book of Mormon, Ether 3: 15, “All men were created in the beginning after mine own image.”

In turn, the statement concludes that if we are created in God’s image in the flesh, then we are created in God’s image in the spiritual creation. It says man is “in the likeness of that which is temporal, and that which is temporal in the likes of that which is spiritual” (Presidency, “Origin” 81). If man was created in the image of God in the spirit, then man was in his image in the flesh. So humans must have always looked the way they do, if this is what God looks like. JFS added, “God was and is our Father, and his children were begotten in the flesh of his own image and likeness, male and female” (J.F. Smith, “Our Indestructible” 595).

To go along with these clarifications JFS and his fellow leaders used a key historical event, the First Vision of Joseph Smith Jr., to build a better understanding of the nature of God. In modern Mormonism the nature of God is grounded in the First Vision. This Vision occurred when young Joseph Smith Jr. prayed to God for answers about his faith, and received a vision of two separate personages: God the Father and Christ. This vision is now known as the opening event in Mormon history, but it was not as widely emphasized and taught in early Mormonism. “Joseph’s First Vision did not immediately acquire a central place for the young LDS community” (Baker and Christenson 162).

The First Vision is an example of an important part of contemporary Mormonism that was not emphasized in the early Mormonism. The decentrality of the vision is an

example of how Mormonism was still developing. How to teach and apply this event to the history and chronology of the faith was still up for debate throughout the first century of Mormonism. Mormon historian James B. Allen wrote, “the fact that none of the available contemporary writings about Joseph Smith in the 1830s, none of the publications of the Church in that decade, and no contemporary journal or correspondence yet discovered mentions the story of the First Vision is convincing evidence that at best it received only limited circulation in those early days” (30). When reviewing and searching old writings it is difficult to find any mention of the vision. It was not used to teach the doctrines and origins of the faith in any great detail.

Even early anti-Mormon publications failed to mention this event. *Delusions: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon* by Alexander Campbell, and *Mormonism Unveiled* by E. D. Howe, both published in the early 1830s, do not talk about or discuss the First Vision. Campbell’s book was mainly focused on refuting the Book of Mormon. Howe’s book on, the other hand, was meant to expose the faith; “[It] contained considerable damaging material against Joseph Smith ... but again no mention of the first vision” (Allen 31). This is an interesting fact because a man claiming to see plural gods should cause considerable debate among people opposed to the Mormon faith.

Many scholars have speculated about why the vision was not emphasized in early Mormonism. Richard L. Bushman, a well-known Mormon scholar, explained in an article titled “The Visionary World of Joseph Smith” that Smith may have been afraid to talk about the vision, due to the discouragement he received after telling a local pastor. He even avoided reciting it to his mother at first (194).

Smith's youth and lack of education could also have played a role. In 1820, when the vision is said to have taken place, he was only fourteen years old. He was a poor, uneducated farmer. For him to have written an account of this vision in a journal, or any other way, would have been very exceptional for the time because of his age. Regardless of his age, another reason the vision did not attract very much attention was the fact that there was no written account of it until 1832.

Many similar accounts of the vision were written over the years. The variation in the different accounts shows that the young Joseph Smith Jr. was himself searching for an interpretation of his experience. The original account of the vision, written in 1832, was more about Joseph's personal experiences. This account "emphasized forgiveness of sins and down played the details of what he saw" (Bushman 194). The 1832 version does not even say Smith saw God the Father *and* Christ. It just explains, "I saw the Lord and he spake unto me" (Jessee 280). It does, however, talk about the apostasy of the world saying, "None doeth good no not one they have turned aside from the gospel" (280). The 1835 version has little communication between Smith and the personages, but emphasizes that there are two of them (284).

The 1838 version is the one used and endorsed by the faith today. This version ties almost everything in the other accounts together. It implies distinctly that Joseph Smith Jr. saw God the Father and Jesus Christ when one of the personages says, "This is my beloved son, hear him" (Jessee 290). It also says that no religious sect on earth was true. It does not, however, mention his personal remission of sins. This version emphasizes the direct communication Joseph Smith had with the two personages (290).

After the death of President Joseph Smith Jr., it took many years for this version of the vision to come to the forefront of Mormonism. Brigham Young often taught about “the tangible personal nature of God,” but never used the First Vision to teach this principle (Nibley 868). Only during the second generation, JFS’s generation, does the vision receive its modern interpretation. JFS played an important role in the inclusion of this event into the major doctrines of the faith. He saw the theological importance of it. He taught the vision and broke it down theologically. When speaking about the First Vision he said, “The thing I want to impress upon you is that God is real a person of flesh and bones, the same as you are and I’m” (J.F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* 478). He consistently used the vision to teach the doctrines of the faith.

Scholar Kathleen Flake explains in her book, *The Politics of American Religious Identity* that JFS helped implement the First Vision into the faith’s historical and theological rhetoric. She notes that President Joseph Smith Jr.’s 1838 account of the vision was added to the Mormon “scriptural canon in 1880 on a motion of Joseph F. Smith,” who was a counselor in the First Presidency at the time (Flake 121). After this, Mormon leaders began to use the vision to teach the Mormon view of the nature of God (118). Because of JFS, “Joseph Smith’s autobiography was divided into chapters and verses and integrated by reference to the rest of the Latter-day Saint scripture” around 1902 (121). This biography includes an account of the First Vision. The vision was officially used in “instructional manuals in 1909” during JFS’s Presidency (118). In 1910, the vision was made into “a separate missionary tract” and used to teach the beginning of Mormonism (118).

The 1838 version became the official version endorsed by the faith. JFS and his fellow leaders no doubt saw this version as referencing many of the core beliefs they wanted to bring to the forefront of the faith. It included details like wide spread corruption and apostasy in the contemporary religious world, and the distinction of God the Father and Christ as two separate beings. It also reinforced the mission of their founder President Joseph Smith Jr. The way he speaks with the personages in this version shows his special mission.

The First Vision, like polygamy before, would become a core “doctrinal fundamental” of Mormonism (Flake 121). Once polygamy ended, JFS and the Mormon hierarchy used the First Vision “to fill the historical, scriptural, and theological void left by the abandonment of plural marriage” (118). The First Vision also gave the faith “a sense of religious difference” and distinction that it had been lacking since the demise of polygamy (120). In the 1838 account, the Lord clearly tells Joseph Smith Jr. that none of the faiths on earth were correct (Jessee 290). This proclamation of corruption led Joseph Smith Jr. to form the Mormon faith, calling it the only true gospel of Christ.

In *Mormons: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* Jan Shipps warns about using the First Vision to begin the story of Mormonism. She claims, “It suggests that a more or less complete theological system was revealed to Joseph Smith in embryo, hiding the dynamism of the developmental process” (33). It takes the Book of Mormon out of the focus and places it on Joseph Smith, and allows “Smith’s spiritual experience ... to legitimate The Book of Mormon” (33). This is exactly what the Mormon leaders wanted at the turn of the twentieth century. JFS and his fellow leaders wanted to take the Mormon story all the way back to its earliest roots, before polygamy.

The Mormon leadership used this event to spiritualize all the events that happened after. If the vision is true, then The Book of Mormon and everything else that came after must be true as well. As Shipps says, it allows Joseph Smith's experience to legitimize The Book of Mormon, but it also allows The Book of Mormon to legitimize Joseph Smith. If you can believe in one you must believe in them both.

The theological weight of the vision also plays a role in its newfound importance at the turn of twentieth century. The First Vision teaches Mormonism's first lesson on the nature of God. It teaches that God has a physical eternal body. God is not a spirit, but a physical being that can be seen and touched. Mormonism teaches just as Christ was resurrected, all people will eventually be resurrected and receive an eternal physical body. It also teaches that God and Christ are two distinct beings. They are not one being, but one in purpose.

The First Vision is now taught as the glorious beginning of Mormonism and the restoration of Christ's Church. JFS wrote, "The greatest event that has ever occurred in the world since the resurrection of the Son of God from the tomb and his ascension on high was the coming of the Father and of the Son to that boy Joseph Smith, to prepare the way for the laying of the foundation of his kingdom...not the kingdom of man...never more to cease nor to be overturned" (J.F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* 495). This vision is the first revelation of President Joseph Smith Jr. JFS's administration established this vision as the key historical event that defines Mormonism, even today.

JFS and his fellow leaders built the Mormon view of God starting with "The Origin of Man" and "The Father and the Son" and tied it all together with the First Vision. All these concepts had been around in some way since the time of President

Joseph Smith Jr., but they had not been formalized as the official view and doctrine of the faith. The Mormon leadership was now saying this is what we believe; there should be no more speculation. Clarification of the doctrines and the principles of a faith are important when establishing a greater identity for the group. Uniformity of Mormon theology was an important factor in establishing the Mormon denominational paradigm.

### **The Word of Wisdom**

The Word of Wisdom is another principle that was given added importance during the JFS administration. President Joseph Smith Jr. issued this revelation as section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants as a law of health in 1833. This law is what Mormons reference when asked why they do not drink alcohol, smoke, or drink coffee and tea.

The early 1830s saw the rise of the temperance movement in the United States, and the rise of the American Temperance Society. This society was started in the 1820s. By the mid-1830s, it had experienced massive growth. In 1835, it claimed to have over eight thousand auxiliaries and over a million associates (M. Young 4). In 1830, the Kirtland branch of this society was formed, and many scholars believe this branch helped pave the way for the Word of Wisdom (Arrington, “Economic” 39). Kirtland, Ohio was the headquarters of the Mormon faith in the early 1830s. This Society was successful “in eliminating a distillery in Kirtland on February 1, 1833, just twenty-seven days before” the Word of Wisdom was revealed (40). This law reflected early Mormonism acceptance of the temperance cause.

At first the Word of Wisdom was not given as a commandment, but as a “principle with promise” as stated in the revelation (D&C 89:3). In Mormonism, a

principle with promise means if a member lives the principle he or she will be blessed. A member who does not live the principle will miss out on the opportunity for blessings, but no one is forced to live it. Because the Word of Wisdom was not a full commandment, many Mormon leaders still drank and used tobacco. JFS was one of these leaders. Having struggled with tobacco and liquor nearly all his life. He once said, “From my childhood --for twenty years and upwards I chewed the filthy weed. I never saw the moment during the whole time that I was not inwardly ashamed of it” (qtd. in Kenney 27). He once told a story of being approached by one of his leaders and knowing he could smell the tobacco on his breath. Though it was not considered a sin at the time, he still felt shameful and desired to end the practice in his life (27).

When he found freedom from his addiction he said, “The appetite . . . is at my command. It is no longer the master, but a subdued, conquered enemy ever on the alert to revolt, but daily growing weaker and more faint” (qtd. in Kenney 27). Though he did drink alcohol on occasions throughout his life, tobacco use seemed to be what weighed on him the most. His own struggles with addictive substances may have added to his zeal for further use of the Word of Wisdom in the faith.

The evolution of the Word of Wisdom from just a suggestion to a commandment is interesting. JFS insisted that the Word of Wisdom was made a commandment under Brigham Young. In a Conference held in October 1913, one of JFS’s counselors, Anthon H. Lund, was addressing the congregation about the Word of Wisdom. In his address, Lund fails to say if the Word of Wisdom was a commandment. He said, “Even if you say about the Word of Wisdom, that it was not given as a commandment but is a word of counsel, do not feel that gives you any more liberty to go contrary to the advice given”

(Lund 13-14). Not content with Lund's lack of conviction JFS took to the podium impromptu, and addressed the people. He said that in the early days, "The Lord was merciful and gave them" time to end the use of the substances banned in the Word of Wisdom (J.F. Smith, "Address" *Eighty-Fourth* 14). That time was up. He continued, "It was announced from this stand, by President Brigham Young, that the Word of Wisdom was a revelation and a commandment of the Lord" (14).

Brigham Young once said in 1851, "those who go with me will keep the Word of Wisdom ... I will draw the line and know who is for the Lord and who is not, and those who will not keep the Word of Wisdom, I will cut off from the Church" (qtd. in McCue 67). This may be the statement JFS was referencing when he took the podium in that 1913 conference. Though this may seem very clear, contradictory statements on the Word of Wisdom from President Young are often found. Young also said later on in 1861, "Some of the brethren are very strenuous upon the 'Word of Wisdom,' and would like to have me preach upon it, and urge it upon the brethren, and make it a test of fellowship. I do not think I shall do so. I have never done so" (B. Young, "Gifts of God" 35).

Brigham Young was never totally committed to making the Word of Wisdom a commandment in his day, judging from his conflicting statements. However, JFS took Brigham Young's 1851 proclamation and used it to lend credibility to his abstinence philosophy. Young felt the Word of Wisdom was important, but did not give any stipulation on having to follow it. JFS used Young's statements to give legitimacy to his belief in the principles. He was in many ways trying to make his innovations on the Word of Wisdom seem less innovative. He wanted people to think that it had been this way for a long time. This would allow people to follow the practice with fewer hesitations.

Mormon scholar Robert J. McCue wrote, “The first president of the Church to publicly declare the Word of Wisdom a commandment apparently was Joseph F. Smith” (74). No leader before him ever tried to enforce the Word of Wisdom. He was attempting to change the perception and meaning of the revelation. Having one of the oldest most revered presidents of the faith to back him up helped his cause.

JFS was the first president to put obedience to the Word of Wisdom as a stipulation on a person’s worthiness. In order to be in good standing, members needed to live this law. He “urged stake presidents and others to refuse recommends” used to enter the temples “to flagrant violators but to be somewhat liberal with old men who used tobacco and old ladies who drank tea” (Alexander, “Word” 79).

JFS and his administration were looking to Joseph Smith’s revelations for answers to their social problems. Substance abuse in Utah, at this time, was becoming a moral and social problem. “Public and private statements indicate that the Church leaders were concerned about the moral tone of the community in which they lived” (Alexander, “Word” 86). Joseph Smith’s revelation on health seemed to fit into what they were going through. The Word of Wisdom thus became a social as well as a moral and spiritual issue.

JFS tied his stance on the Word of Wisdom to the popular temperance movement taking place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He preached, “The best way to teach temperance is to keep the Word of Wisdom; and the next best is to assist others to keep it” (J.F. Smith, “Temperance” 333). As when the Word of Wisdom was initially given, the temperance social movement seemed to play a role in it becoming a commandment.

The ever-increasing popularity of the prohibition movement also played a role in this new emphases on the Word of Wisdom. Just before a conference in the fall of 1910, JFS gave a statement to all the other leaders of the faith. He said he did not want them to speak of statewide prohibition in the conference, and they should hope for the local option (Hatch 438). JFS did want some form of prohibition, but he did not want to make it a “political issue” and wanted prohibition to be more of a personal choice, or a community choice (551).

Though not officially endorsed, Mormonism’s new focus on the Word of Wisdom did not leave anyone questioning its true stance on prohibition, but publicly the faith took more of a temperance view. Though some were more hardcore than others, all the Mormon leaders were looking to reduce alcohol use in Utah.

The Word of Wisdom played an important role in helping Mormonism define itself post-polygamy. Polygamy was the most influential social practice in Mormonism, and defined the faith in many people’s eyes. In the twentieth century, the Word of Wisdom would become the defining social practice of the faith.

JFS’s stance on the principle became the blueprint for future leaders. The Word of Wisdom was reinforced by President Heber J. Grant, JFS’s successor, who stood by him on his abstinence stance. Later, under President Grant, the Word of Wisdom became an official commandment. It is now one of the most defining cultural aspects of the Mormon faith. JFS used a new policy on an old revelation to redefine the Mormon lifestyle. In the nineteenth-century faith, the Word of Wisdom was just a suggestion. Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, The Word of Wisdom had become a permanent part of the modern Mormon identity.

## **D&C Section 138 and Gospel Doctrine**

One of JFS's most important theological developments was his reinforcing the idea that the Mormon president has "divine authority by direct revelation" from God (qtd. in Flake 121). The president of the Mormon faith is called a prophet along with the Twelve Apostles. It is believed that they are seers and revelators for the faith, just like in ancient times. JFS wanted the members to believe that he was a prophet just like his uncle President Joseph Smith Jr. before him.

JFS helped reintroduce and redefine many old revelations, but he also claimed that he personally had divine authority by adding new revelations. The Word of Wisdom and the First Vision show how he redefined the Mormon theological identity, but section 138 of the Doctrine and Covenants shows him adding to it.

On October 3, 1918, JFS wrote an account of a vision he claimed to have recently received (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 466). This vision was about Jesus Christ's visit to the spirit world before his resurrection. In Mormonism, the spirit world is a place where all souls go to await the resurrection. The souls of the righteous that accepted Christ and his gospel are separated from the souls of the wicked and those who did not accept or did not know Christ's gospel. In JFS's vision, Christ gathered "from among the righteous ... appointed messengers" and taught them so they could teach the spirits of those who did not know of him in mortal life (468-469). This means the souls of the righteous will go to the wicked and unknowing, and teach them about Christ. JFS referenced in this vision many Mormon leaders who had passed on, who he saw among the righteous dead. He called it "The vision of the redemption of the dead," and gave counsel to his people about

the work they needed to do to help their family that had passed on without the gospel (471). This includes proxy ordinance work for the dead in Mormon temples.

In Mormonism, the Temple is not just a place where the faithful go and receive ordinances for themselves. Mormons also go to the temple to receive ordinances on behalf of their family members who have passed on who did not get a chance to receive them in this life. These ordinances include baptism all the way up to sealing of families through proxy marriages. This vision taught that the souls of the righteous who have passed on are teaching the souls of the unrighteous and the unknowing. They are preparing these souls to accept or reject the ordinances done for them in this life by proxy. JFS's vision laid a stronger foundation for this practice. Work for the dead would become a central part of the faith.

No theological revelation had been added to the Mormon scriptural canon since President Joseph Smith Jr. led the faith. Brigham Young's vision on how to organize the pioneer camp was added as Section 136 of The Doctrine and Covenants. President John Taylor had written section 135 of The Doctrine and Covenants, which is the description of the events surrounding the death of President Joseph Smith Jr., and President Wilford Woodruff had issued the Manifesto on polygamy. None of these sections had the same theological weight as JFS's vision of the redemption of the dead. Issuing this revelation positioned him alongside the most revered leaders of Mormonism.

Though this vision was given in 1918, it took many years for it to be canonized as doctrine. On April 3, 1976 an account of this vision was sustained in the Church's General Conference as a part of the "standard works" of the Mormon faith and canonized (Tanner 29). Since the conference in 1976, Mormon temple work for the dead has grown

tremendously. The canonizing of this document and its inclusion in Mormon teaching materials kick started the Mormon genealogy boom that began in the 1980s.

This revelation came near the end of JFS's administration, and legitimized to his followers all the things he had done as a leader. It also reestablished the Mormon president as a prophet still receiving revelation from God. During his life, JFS focused the faith on teaching what had been, according to Mormons, revealed to the prophets as doctrine. He wanted to clear out all the speculations and opinions that many had developed over the years about many important doctrines and principles of the faith. He once said, "We will preach nothing to the people except that which the Lord God has revealed, and we advise and counsel those who are in authority ... to confine their teachings and their instructions to the word of God that has been revealed" (J.F. Smith, "Greeting" 5). He wanted them to teach a standard Mormon doctrine, no more confusion. By doing this, JFS and his fellow leaders were establishing what proper Mormon doctrine is.

Kuhn stated, "During pre-paradigm periods ... scientists usually develop many speculative and unarticulated theories" (61). In nineteenth-century Mormonism the best way to teach and understand the faith's doctrines and principles was still being developed. It was time to clear out all the "speculative and unarticulated" doctrines, to streamline Mormon theology. Streamlining and organizing is also an important step for a sect to take when transitioning to a denominational church. Niebuhr wrote that "the ideal of uniformity and fear of the abnormal characterize the state church as they do the state" (129). This desire for uniformity also describes denominations, which are run by

uniformity in creeds, rules, and procedures. Mormonism was developing these attributes as it transitioned out of the sect phase and into a denominational church.

At the turn of twentieth century, JFS and his fellow leaders took away any confusion by establishing a standard way to teach and articulate these principles. He once said, “We should be satisfied with that which is accepted as doctrine, and not discuss matters that, after all disputes, are merely matters of theory” (Presidency, “Pre-existent” 417). The era of theory was over, and the foundation of Mormon doctrine had now been laid.

The First Vision, the Word of Wisdom, the nature of God, and work for the dead, all of these doctrines so fundamental to Mormonism did not receive their final definition until the JFS administration. These principles define not only the faith, but all Mormons as individual people. Mormons believe their church is the only true church on the face of the earth, as taught in the First Vision. They believe their bodies to be sacred as taught in the Word of Wisdom, and that God has a sacred physical body as taught in the First Vision. Genealogy work has become something almost completely connected to Mormons. JFS helped emphasize the doctrines that eventually became fundamental to the Modern Mormon identity.

JFS spent his entire presidency clarifying and explaining Mormon theology in speeches, letters, and articles. These different speeches, letters, and articles were recorded and saved. Some of his compatriots in the faith decided to collect these writings and speeches and publish them. The introduction to this collection, titled *Gospel Doctrine*, explains why the book was compiled.

JFS was once overheard explaining to some people that “unlike many of his brethren, he would leave no written work, by which he might be remembered” after his death (Committee, Introduction to *Gospel Doctrine*). This was true; he had never written any specific book of his own ministry. John A. Widtsoe, a close friend of JFS, who later became a member of the Twelve Apostles, over heard this statement and felt inspired to gather many of the speeches and letters JFS had written. The gathered speeches and materials were eventually published. This publication contained “subjects covering a wide range in gospel doctrine and philosophy as taught by the Latter-day Saints” or Mormons (Committee).

Shortly before his death, JFS was able to read the finished compilation (Committee). The “Committee on Study for the Priesthood Quorums” reviewed the work, and under the instruction of Apostle David O. McKay “made it a text book for the Priesthood” (Committee). This was the first real compilation of Mormon theology covering all areas from politics to war, from morality to celestial families. This compilation is still in use today, and is appropriately titled, *Gospel Doctrine*. The compilers of this collection gave this statement, “Gathered, classified, arranged, and printed as in this volume, they constitute a compendium of the doctrine and teachings of the Church that we believe will stand as a safe guide for its members for generations to come” (Committee).

JFS’s knowledge of these principles can be attributed to his time as a Church Historian, and his years of high-level service that covered nearly half a century. He was never considered a scholar or genius, but a thinker who was able to put the pieces together for the next generation. JFS used his knowledge to lay a clear theological

foundation for the future of Mormonism. This new foundation helped the Mormons establish a new denominational paradigm. Niebuhr wrote that churches and denominations “seeks uniformity primarily within the sphere of belief and worship” (126). This new found theological uniformity gave the Mormon faith the stability JFS had been working for. The Mormons were laying a foundation for a new denominational style church.

## V. Ritualized History

This new denominational church needed a new history that did not emphasize tragedy and failure. The history of the Mormons at the turn the twentieth century was not very pretty. Polygamy, political power, and communal failure were the key talking points of how the world viewed the Mormons. How can the story of the Mormon people be told, yet not emphasizing its many failures and shortcomings? As stated before, “Paradigms gain their status because they are more successful than their competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute” (Kuhn 23). This idea can also be attributed to how the historical views of a society or group are formed or changed. Whatever narrative solves the problems set by the unfavorable history is what will be accepted and passed down to future generations. Whatever is in the history of given group that is not so favorable will be pushed aside for a more favorable narrative. This is known as a “ritualized history” (Bitton 183).

Ritualized history is not a comprehensive history. Mormon scholar Davis Bitton describes ritualized history as “not satisfactory for all purposes. By definition it is simplified. It celebrates that which is celebratable, ignoring much of the past as it was.” This is a “simplified” version of history that down plays, and sometimes even omits, parts of history that are not useful or even acceptable (183). Polygamy and communal

philosophies are all historical facts about Mormonism that are often omitted or over simplified in the Mormon historical narrative.

At the turn of the twentieth century the Mormon faith was in need of a redefining of its past. The last half of the nineteenth century had been hard on the Mormon people. They needed to establish a simplified “ritualized history” that could build more “cohesion” among them (Bitton 182). JFS and the other Mormon leaders made a concerted effort to establish this type of history. This new historical view, in turn, helped establish the new Mormon denominational paradigm.

Three major steps were made in building this “ritualized history.” The first was controlling the message going out. This involved building visitor centers for people to learn about the faith. The second was the acquisition of historic places from the Mormon past. This included places like the sacred grove in New York, where President Joseph Smith Jr. is said to have had his First Vision, and the Whitmer farm where the faith’s first official meeting was held. The third step was establishing days of remembrance and commemoration, like Pioneer Day, the day the Mormon people entered the Salt Lake Valley.

Building visitor centers, buying important sites and properties, and commemorating special events allowed the Mormon leadership to highlight the history they wanted their people to remember. They took the emphasis off history involving polygamy and the Utah war, and placed a greater importance on the perseverance of the pioneers, and the golden era of the faith in the east.

This new historical narrative helped Mormonism transition into a modern denominational church at the turn of the twentieth century. A denominational church

needs a way “of bringing the new generation into conformity with ideals and customs which have become traditional” (Niebuhr 19-20). Historical education is how tradition is passed. Developing a ritualized historical narrative is part of this process.

### **Bureau of Information**

Visitor centers are very important to Mormon missionary activities. These centers play an important role in maintaining the message and history the faith wants to portray. JFS played a key role in the development of Mormon visitor centers with the advent of the Bureau of Information in Salt Lake City. This bureau would become the first Mormon visitor center.

Controlling the message of the faith became more important as the modern era began. The world was becoming smaller and faster. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of people visiting or passing through Utah had increased. Salt Lake City was becoming a place of interest for people going west. During this time, hotel owners would send drivers to the train stations to try to win the business of these travelers. These men were known for filling the minds of those traveling through Salt Lake with lies and exaggerations about the Mormon faith (Cowan 37-38). They did this to make the city seem more exotic and interesting. Many of the people in the Mormon community thought they needed to fight the falsehoods spread abroad, but did not realize how much was being spread at home.

In 1901, the idea came about to build what would be known as The Bureau of Information. This building would be a place for people to receive authorized information about Mormonism, its history, and the temple, directly from the faith itself. When the

idea was first proposed it was not met with immediate approval (E. Anderson 133). After the passing of President Snow, JFS took over as president and the Bureau of Information was one of the first things he had to face. On June 4, 1902, after nearly a year of discussion and planning, JFS finally decided “to have the pavilion built at once” (137).

The bureau was built next to the temple in Salt Lake City. Mormon temples are not open to the public, and even members have to be found worthy to enter them. The temple at the time was the largest building in the city. People traveling through would no doubt see this structure and want to know what it is, or go inside. This new information center gave these people a place to go and learn, and allowed Mormonism a level of transparency it did not have before.

On August 4, 1902, the Bureau of Information opened on Temple Square (J. Fielding Smith, *Essentials* 625). By the end of the first year, one hundred and fifty thousand people had visited the Bureau. The response by visitors was so positive that the Bureau was expanded and enhanced. Three subsequent additions were added in 1904, 1910 and 1918. These included a “commodities building,” as well as “a museum of pioneer relics” (E. Anderson 139). Adding this museum helped not only non-members understand Mormon history, but the members visiting as well.

With the Bureau of Information, JFS and his administration really started to control the information about the faith going out to the people for the first time in Mormon history. Now people could come to Salt Lake and hear what the faith was about, from the faith directly and not from rumor or gossip. Visitor centers much like the Bureau of Information have been built by the Mormons all over the United States, and the world.

Nearly every historical site and every major temple in Mormonism has a visitor center. The history of all these centers can be traced back to the Bureau of Information.

### **Historical Sites**

All major religious groups have historical sites that carry historical and spiritual significance. Like the dome of the rock to Islam, and the western wall to the Jews, visitors to these places can feel the shared history of the group. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Mormon leadership started buying up historically significant places from the faith past. Salt Lake City may be the headquarters of the modern Church, but these sites are its sacred places.

It is important to note that Mormonism was just beginning to enter into an era of prosperity during the JFS administration. It has been reported that \$161,000 was spent between 1901 and 1915 buying historical sites (J.F. Smith, "Opening" *Eighty Sixth* 7). This was a very large sum of money in the early twentieth century, and a large sacrifice of funds. This example shows the commitment the Mormons had in teaching their view of their history to the world, while building their own ritualized history.

JFS and his administration were the first to start buying back the historic buildings and properties that were important to Mormonism. Shortly after JFS became president of the faith he was approached about buying the Carthage Jail in Illinois. This jail is where President Joseph Smith Jr. was murdered along with his brother Hyrum, JFS's father. On September 24, 1903, JFS, his counselors, and the Twelve Apostles bought the site for \$4,000 (Cannon 6).

Owning the Carthage Jail gave the faith the ability to determine the "interpretation of the martyrdom" or the death of President Joseph Smith Jr. (Cannon 6). It gave the faith

the ability to tell the story how it believed it should be told. This was the case with all the sites that were subsequently bought. Taking back their history was a way to establish this developing church's identity, and to put it in line with the new denominational Mormon paradigm. The world would know the events that took place at these locations as the Mormon leaders wanted them to be known.

In the nineteenth century people outside of Mormonism controlled the image of the faith and its leaders through propaganda and slander. The outside world often associated President Joseph Smith Jr.'s life with fraud, debt, and sexual exploits. JFS's purchase of these historical places gave the faith real control over its founder's image outside of Utah. The faith would develop a standard historical narrative for not only President Joseph Smith Jr., but for the all of its history.

Probably the most important site acquired and refurbished during JFS's administration was the birthplace of President Joseph Smith Jr. in Vermont. On December 23, 1905, JFS presided at the dedication of a monument built on this site one hundred years to the day of President Smith's birth ("Proceedings" 9). The monument was the brainchild of Junius F. Wells, who, through the guidance of JFS, coordinated its construction and design. The monument is made of granite and is 38 ½ feet high, a foot for every year of President Joseph Smith Jr.'s life (J. Fielding Smith, *Essentials* 631).

His monument was the first major historical site the Mormon leadership had built. Many important sites would be bought and refurbished in the years to come with monument and even temples built on or near them. The dedication of this site was an event celebrated by the whole faith. JFS encouraged all members to consecrate this event "with fitting ceremonies" (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 353).

Religious scholar Kathleen Flake described the importance of this monument perfectly. She said that it “provided the occasion for identifying what about him [President Joseph Smith Jr.] and his legacy mattered to the L.D.S Church and what would be carried forward” (Flake 110). It gave the leaders a chance to reteach President Joseph Smith Jr.’s story to their people, and the world, as they wanted it to be told.

This renewed focus on the early history of the faith can also be seen as JFS’s way of helping his people forget the trials of the previous decades. It took Mormonism back to its roots as a restorationist faith, and gave it a history to be proud of. JFS was reintroducing the period before polygamy. He was reminding his people that Mormonism existed before polygamy, and it would continue to go on now that it was over. From this time forward, polygamy would not hold any real historical significance in the narrative expressed by the modern Church.

### **Pioneer Day**

Constructing this “ritualized history” created for the Mormon faith a collective memory, a concept developed by Philosopher Maurice Halbwachs. This is the shared memory of a distinct group of people. One type of collective memory is “historical memory.” This is when a “person does not remember events directly; it can only be stimulated in indirect ways through reading or listening or commemoration” (Coser 24). Scholar Kathleen Flake references the work of Maurice Halbwachs on collective memory in her book, *The Politics of American Religious Identity*. She explains that Halbwach’s thesis points to the fact “that commemoration is inevitably a function of selective memory” (Flake 114). Celebrating the past with days of remembrance, parties and

events, helps people build a collective historical memory. Over time people will only select the memories the group feels are important, and leave the other behind. When people gather for commemoration, they preserve their memories “through imaginatively reenacting a past that would otherwise slowly disappear in the haze of time” (Coser 24). Like passion plays amongst Catholics, these events were not experienced firsthand, but passed down through commemoration and annual repetition. In Mormonism the holiday of Pioneer Day fits this profile.

Mormons have celebrated Pioneer Day, in some form or another, every year on July 24<sup>th</sup> since they arrived in the Salt lake Valley in 1847. In nineteenth-century Mormonism, “Pioneer day was one of the most important occasions for creating and maintaining the collective memory of the Latter-day Saints” (Olsen 174). JFS wanted this to continue for the future, and needed it to, in order to help his people move away from the turmoil of the late nineteenth century. JFS was a pioneer as a young child. The desire to remember the struggles, but most of all, the resilience of the pioneers, must have been strong in him.

Much of the focus of this new ritualized history was on the eastern United States, President Joseph Smith Jr., and the beginnings of Mormonism. Pioneer Day provided a place in this new history for the western movement of the Mormon people. Mormonism’s western history was not defined by polygamy anymore. It would now be defined by the American pioneer spirit of self-reliance, hard work and freedom. Americans revere their pioneer heritage. The Mormons were a part of this American pioneer heritage.

JFS made Pioneer Day an official Mormon holiday, recognized by the “church calendar” (Flake 167). This event would develop into a “ritual celebration” focused on

Mormonism's "resourcefulness and triumph," the "rights, not [the] wrongs" that had come upon the Mormon people (167). It was about the positive not the negative side of their history. Pioneer Day became more about freedom and the American dream, than pain and suffering. JFS described the holiday as a way "to provide an object lesson to our young people and create within their hearts feelings of patriotism and loyalty ... to keep alive in the hearts and memories of our youth the instructive lessons of our pioneer life" (J.F. Smith, "Celebration" 176).

The paradigm of Mormon history was forever altered after the JFS presidency. Before this, it would have been easy for a Mormon to look at the past as a time of failure and rejection. They could look at their inability to live the communal laws, their unsuccessful practice of polygamy, and their abandonment of so many communities as failure. They could see the murder of their prophet as rejection. JFS's celebration of the birth of President Joseph Smith Jr., and the acquisition and eventual refurbishing of many historic sites, were a cause of excitement. JFS affirmed at the turn of the twentieth century that Mormon history was something that needed to be celebrated and remembered.

Building monuments and visitor centers and buying important historical sites showed JFS's desire to build a stable "ritualized history" for his people. JFS once said, "Teach your children so that they may grow up knowing what 'Mormonism' is" (J.F. Smith, "No Time" 287). To Mormons this statement refers to not only theological teaching, but also historical understanding. JFS and his fellow leaders did not change the history of the faith; they just emphasized the good parts and downplayed the bad.

Mormonism was no longer weak and vulnerable, it was becoming strong. Strength was the image the Mormon leadership wanted to portray with this new ritualized history.

## **VI. Institutional Reform**

The new denominational Mormon Church that JFS and his fellow leaders were establishing needed a new institutional structure. This new structure would modernize the faith, help it expand, and give it greater continuity and consensus. Nineteenth-century Mormonism lacked structure on many levels. Its buildings were not adequate for a growing faith, and its organizational structure was not complete.

This chapter will explore the rise of three concepts in Mormonism modernization: expansion, continuity and consensus. The building of a new church headquarters in Salt Lake City, as well as a lavish new hotel, gave Utah a sense of growth and modernization. The building of temples outside of Utah gave the faith a sense of expansion. Mormonism was building away from its Rocky Mountain home. Lastly, JFS helped organize the educational structure of the faith, building a sense of continuity and consensus that the faith had lacked over the last century. This chapter shows how each of these concepts helped define the Mormon denominational paradigm. The first part of the chapter, though, will look at issues surrounding the faith's lack of institutional growth and organization. This will focus mainly on Mormonism's problem with debt in the nineteenth century.

## Debt Relief

One problem that kept nineteenth century Mormonism in a state of conflict and confusion was massive debt. Mormonism had suffered from debt through most of its early history. During the Kirtland, Ohio period, debt began to be a major problem. The failure of a Mormon run bank in Kirtland, known as the “Kirtland Safety Society,” just added to the growing problem. “Joseph Smith’s potential cumulative indebtedness during this period, including all purchases of land and merchandise, totaled a little over \$100,000” (Wimmer 792-793). A majority of this debt was resolved, but some still lingered (792-793). Financial difficulties seemed to follow Mormonism and its leaders throughout the nineteenth century.

As the century rolled on, and the faith went west, debt became an even bigger problem. The anti-polygamy acts passed in the 1880s left the Mormons in a perilous financial situation. Even after the government attacks ended in the 1890s Mormonism still struggled financially. It was not until the latter part of the 1890s that the leadership began to take control of the finances.

In 1899, the Mormon leadership “appoint[ed] an auditing committee to oversee expenditures” (Alexander, *Transition* 99). Before this committee was formed the leadership had “virtually no budgetary control” making financial decisions as they came rather than properly planning them out (99). The committee found “the Church to be bankrupt by 43,000 dollars” (Hatch 170). After years of working, the committee started new financial records that allowed the Mormon leadership to see the faith’s financial situation more clearly. This committee helped the faith find that it had more “property and income” than it originally thought (Alexander, *Transition* 99). JFS’s predecessor,

President Lorenzo Snow, then “began to pay off obligations held by private creditors” (99).

Debt relief remained an important goal during JFS’s presidency. Having been a counselor to four of the five previous Church presidents he had the ability to “direct the financial affairs of the Church” more smoothly (Cowan 46). This was due to his deeper understanding of the many problems facing the faith. JFS also had strong personal feelings against debt and was insistent on helping the faith enjoy financial freedom. Charles W. Nibley, a respected Mormon leader, wrote about JFS, “He abhorred debt, and no man have I ever known who was so prompt to pay an obligation to the last penny. He could not rest until the Church was out of debt” (qtd. in J.F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* 519).

By 1906, Mormonism had been cleared of all its major financial problems, and began to look to the future. At a Conference held in April 1907, JFS announced, “Today the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints owes not a dollar that it cannot pay at once ... we do not have to borrow any more” (J.F. Smith, “Opening Address” *Seventy Seventh* 7).

The Mormons were experiencing financial growth along with most of the country at this time. From the mid-1890s until around 1906 the United States had a growth rate around 7.3 percent per year. “The young American Economy was roaring” (Bruner and Carr 7). This was a period of prosperity. “The U.S. economy in 1907 was larger and growing faster than ever” (7). The Mormon faith was seeing benefits from this growth that helped it recover from its debt.

Much of this growth came to an end due to the panic of 1907, but the Mormon faith still continued to grow. In the years “between 1814 and 1914” there were “13

banking ... panics” in the United States (Bruner and Carr 4). A bank panic is when people, fearing a market collapse, make a run on the bank to try to get as much of their money back as possible. It is estimated that “the panic of 1907 was among the worst” (4). This crisis was brought on by the earthquake and fires “that destroyed the city of San Francisco in 1906,” and “coincided with a series of major market downturns” (4). The Mormon faith was stable financially for the first time in its history the year this crisis hit. Fear of falling back into debt must have fueled the Mormon hierarchy’s drive to keep debt out of the faith. This new focus allowed the faith to be affected very little by the crisis, and subsequent crises. JFS told his people to “get out of debt; keep out of debt” (qtd. in J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 406).

JFS continued making important changes that helped the finances of faith remain steady. In 1908, the tithing program was restructured and changed to a currency-only system (Alexander, *Transition* 100). Before this restructuring, members could pay not only with money, but also with “labor, personal property, livestock, and produce” (Quinn, “LDS” 18). This new cash-based system made collecting the tithes much easier and more effective. Using only cash also allowed the leadership to disperse the tithing funds back into and around the faith faster and easier (Alexander, *Transition* 101).

JFS also began to give a full financial disclosure of how the tithes had been used at the annual General Conference of the Church. During the developmental period the faith’s financial reports were always very limited, and poorly detailed. This changed in 1915 when the “Church released its first report to ‘show how the tithing of the Church for the year 1914 has been disbursed’”(qtd. in Quinn, “LDS” 24). Members were now able to see where their tithing donations were going.

JFS's stance on "no debt" is still the rhetoric used in Mormonism today. In the two General Conferences the modern Church holds every year, debt and financial responsibility are very common topics. Today Mormonism prides itself on being debt free and financially independent. The Mormons had spent so many years just trying to survive. During the JFS administration things changed; the modern Mormon Church now had an image of financial responsibility and stability.

Being debt free allowed JFS's administration to lead the faith into a time of great expansion and growth on a level it had not seen previously. Mormonism now had the freedom to build a strong institutional base, for the first time in its history. This involved building a new headquarters in Salt Lake City. It also involved the building of the lavish Hotel Utah, establishing Salt Lake City as a travel destination on the national stage. The faith also reinstated the building of temples for the first time in many years. JFS and his fellow leaders also set out to organize the education system of the faith on all levels.

### **Modernization: A New Church Center**

JFS began this new expansion by building modern structures with historical roots. He looked into the early years of the faith and found proclamations by President Joseph Smith Jr., about buildings he said he was commanded by God to build. JFS used these old revelations not only to complete ideas and plans issued by President Joseph Smith Jr., but to reconnect Mormonism with this earlier period. These structures helped add to the historical memory of the faith, just like the acquisition of the historical sites.

JFS's uncle, President Joseph Smith Jr., had many grand ideas during his life. Two of these ideas were the constructing of both a private building for the Mormon

Presidency and a large hotel for the courting of foreign guests. President Joseph Smith Jr. claimed to have been commanded by God to build these buildings. The revelations that he said he received to build these buildings are found in the book of Doctrine and Covenants. JFS took these revelations and made them a reality. In doing so, he brought the past in line with the future, and in a sense, fulfilled some of the revelations of his late uncle. Building two large modern buildings in Salt Lake also added to the prestige of the city and the faith.

Since the early years of Mormonism, it was deemed important to designate a place for the first presidency to occupy and work privately. President Joseph Smith Jr. told his people that he received a revelation to build a special building for this purpose. He said, “Let the first lot on the south be consecrated unto me for the building of a house for the presidency, for the work of the presidency, in obtaining revelations; and for the work of the ministry of the presidency” (D&C 94:3). This building was to be built in Kirtland, Ohio, but was pushed aside for the completion of the temple there (Richardson 232).

Over the years a variety of buildings were used to house the presidency. These included the second floor of President Joseph Smith Jr.’s Red Brick Store in Nauvoo Illinois, and Brigham Young’s house known as the Beehive House in Utah. The special building that President Smith talked about was continually postponed throughout the nineteenth century due to poor finances and persecution (Richardson 232).

By the turn of the twentieth century, the time had come for the Mormon leadership to seriously consider building this new structure. The faith now had internal

stability. Constructing this new building for the presidency added a measure of institutional stability that Mormonism had been lacking.

Construction began in September 1913, and the building was completed on October 2, 1917 (Richardson 245). JFS wanted the building to be “a monument of the real character of the work in which we are engaged” (“New Church” 8). To this day it stands as a symbol of the growth Mormonism had seen to that point. JFS’s son, Joseph Fielding Smith, would later refer to the building as “one of the most important of all the structures” built by his father (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 427). This building still houses the offices of the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles.

JFS used another old reference to the early period of the faith to justify the building of a new hotel in Salt Lake City. In the City of Nauvoo, Illinois, President Joseph Smith Jr. said he received a revelation to build a hotel, later called The Nauvoo House. This hotel was intended to be “a house that strangers may come from afar to lodge therein... that the weary traveler may find health and safety while he shall contemplate the word of the Lord” (D&C 124: 23). This building was never completed in Nauvoo, and just like the new administrative building, was pushed aside for the completion of the temple in Nauvoo. Once the faith became financially stable, JFS decided to accomplish the plans of his uncle by constructing this building in Salt Lake City, and calling it the Hotel Utah.

JFS was very passionate about the Hotel Utah. He spent a great deal of time and money on this building. He wanted this building to be important and grand. JFS described it as being “one of the most magnificent hotels that exists on the continent of America, or in the old continent either” (J.F. Smith, “Closing Remarks” *Eighty-first* 129). The early

twentieth century was a time when many cities were building large upscale hotels, like the Plaza in New York and the Georgian Terrace Hotel in Atlanta, both built around the turn of the century. JFS wanted Salt Lake City to be seen as up-to-date and modern. Building this large hotel was important for cultivating this image.

This hotel is still a part of the modern Church today. Known today as the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. It is now an event center, tourist attraction, and office building. It still holds an important place in the Mormon faith. Upon entering this building, there is a large statue of President Joseph Smith Jr. put there in commemoration of him. JFS built this building to fulfill what he believed was God's command to his uncle. JFS read the revelations as if he were commanded to build them, just like his uncle before him. JFS was building a bridge to the future while also justifying the past by building massive structures in the name of Mormonism's greatest leader. He clearly wanted to bridge his legacy with his uncle's. He fulfilled the legacy of President Joseph Smith Jr. through his own.

Building a new state-of-the-art hotel in Salt Lake City can also be seen as Mormonism opening its doors. JFS wanted his faith and his people to be accessible to the outside world. The Hotel Utah was a symbol of how far the Mormons had come in such a short time in terms of their accessibility to the world. As a young man, JFS witnessed federal troops walking down the main street in Salt Lake City. This was a time when the government feared that Mormonism had something to hide. Now as an old man he effectively opened the city up for visits from the outside, declaring that the Mormons has nothing to hide, come and see.

## **Temples and Expansion**

In Mormonism, the temple is the most valuable building for worship. The temple is where the most significant ordinances and ceremonies are performed. Temples are also where people go to learn about the next life, and do proxy baptism for family members who died without the knowledge of the faith – the practice known as baptism for the dead. Without temples, these ceremonies could not be performed.

The need for a communal center of the faith became even more important with the abandonment of the independent kingdom. The Mormons in the nineteenth century were seeking a utopia in this life. Without the prospect of a utopian community literally in this life, the temple took on this role in the community. In it, all things are common, and the work of the kingdom moves forward. The temples became their own separate Zion utopia, wherever one is built in the world. When a new temple is built, it becomes a symbol that Mormons are now a part of the society where it was built.

For Mormons living in the early period of the faith building a new temple was a big undertaking and took many years. For instance, it took nearly a half century to build the temple in Salt Lake City. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Mormon faith had only four operational temples, all of which were in the state of Utah. When JFS took office there had not been an announcement for a new temple since the 1870s. This was the longest stretch of time in the history of Mormonism without the announcement or dedication of a new temple.

Like all the other building projects happening at the turn of the twentieth century, economic pressure and debt caused the building of any new temples to be pushed aside for many decades. The attacks on polygamy, and the near confiscation of the existing

temples in the late 1880s, did not encourage the Mormons to want to build more at that time. This changed during the JFS administration.

In 1906, JFS became the first seated Mormon president to visit Europe. While on this trip, he made a prophecy about the future of temples in the Mormon faith. He said, "The time would come when temples to the Most High would be built in various countries of the world" (qtd. in Josephson 686). This speech was given in Switzerland. JFS would start to fulfill his own prophecy when he announced the building of two temples away from the main body of the faith. These two temples were to be built in Canada and Hawaii.

The first temple JFS announced during his presidency was the Canada Temple. This temple would become the first one built outside the United States, and the first temple built outside the established Zion of Utah. For the first time, Mormonism was reaching out to its members away from the main body, rather than asking them to come to Utah. This new temple was located in Alberta, Canada, in the western part of the country. This area had been heavily populated by Mormons, sent there by Brigham Young to build new colonies. JFS announced his desire to build a temple in Canada during the Friday priesthood meeting at the October 1912 General Conference (*A History* 71).

JFS's administration aimed to make this temple different. It was the first temple announced in the twentieth century, the first outside the U.S., and the first to be announced in the post-polygamy faith. The First Presidency invited many architecture firms to submit ideas for the new temple. Most of the designs submitted held to the traditional, and looked like many of the other temples already built. JFS and his

counselors would end up choosing a “daringly modern design” submitted by a new inexperienced firm (P. Anderson 8).

This new firm gave the temple a modern look that resembled none of the previous temples built by the faith. The architects took inspiration from Frank Lloyd Wright as well as from the ancient Indian ruins of Mexico (P. Anderson 9-10). This temple was the template for many of the temples built by the Mormons in the coming decades. JFS’s insistence on a modern look was an expression of his eye toward the future. He wanted Mormonism to be seen as reflecting the present, not the past. The modern design was a chance to show the world that the Mormons were an educated people, and not a backward western faith. This firm went on to build many temples for the Church including the next temple announced by JFS in Hawaii.

At a Conference in the fall of 1915, JFS announced the building of another new temple. It was his intention “to build a temple that shall be dedicated to the ordinances of the house of God, down upon one of the Sandwich Islands,” the Hawaiian Islands (J.F. Smith, “Opening Address” *Eighty-Sixth* 8). JFS loved the people of Hawaii, having spent years there as missionary. It was only natural for him when looking for a temple site away from the continental United States to look at Hawaii as an option.

JFS at the conference explained why he chose Hawaii. He expressed to his people how little the Hawaiian people have, and explained how it would be nearly impossible for them to raise funds to come to Utah and receive temple blessings, like marriage – sealing – for eternity. He explained that they pay full tithing, and are worthy of having temples in their midst. He then moved for a motion from the body of the faith, which was favorable (J.F. Smith, “Opening Address” *Eighty-Sixth* 8-9).

Though Hawaii was a United States Territory in 1915, it may as well have been another country. Building a temple so far away from the main body of members was truly risky. This showed the full intent of JFS to expand the faith, not only in the Polynesian world that he had grown to love as a missionary, but all over the world.

The temples in Canada and Hawaii stand as symbols for where the faith was moving over the next century. International growth would become a very important focus for the Mormon faith. In a conference in 1901, JFS said, “I foresee the necessity arising for other temples or places consecrated to the Lord for the performance of the ordinances of God’s house, so that the people may have the benefits of the house of the Lord without having to travel hundreds of miles for that purpose” (J.F. Smith, “Closing Remarks” *Seventy First* 69). This statement is not only about international growth. It can also apply to the building of new temples throughout the United States as well.

JFS could have easily built a temple in Utah, or even in one of the surrounding states, but he did not. He wanted to reach the members that lived far away and show them they were just as important as members in Utah. JFS also wanted the world to see that Mormonism was expanding. Building another temple in Utah would just add to the growing mystery of Mormonism. Building one as far away as Canada, and even Hawaii gave the faith a sense of true growth and international appeal. Today more Mormons live outside the United States than inside. These two temples expressed JFS’s confidence that this major growth would come.

JFS would not live to see the dedications of these two Temples, but his legacy of growth and expansion would continue on to the next generations. Another temple would not be built outside the United States until the 1950s. This temple was built in

Switzerland, the same country where JFS gave his prophecy of temple growth and expansion.

In the nineteenth century the Mormon leadership was asking all the members to gather to Utah to help build the kingdom. Building temples outside of Utah, or its surrounding states, was unnecessary when all the members were told to gather to the Mormon colonies in the west. The Mormon identity as a gathering people ended around the turn of the twentieth century. The leadership started to tell the new converts to stay where they were, and build the faith. They were to build Zion where they lived in their own communities. The identity of the international Mormon Church was formed in this period. JFS embraced this with his tours of Europe. Salt Lake City would become the headquarters of the modern Church, not Zion. Mormonism was organizing, not just on the home front, but organizing and establishing itself all over the world.

### **Church Education: Building Continuity and Consensus**

By the turn of the twentieth century the Mormon educational structure needed to be organized and updated on all levels, from the local congregational or ward level, to the eventual church-wide level. Organization, education, and continuity are hallmarks of the denominational style church Mormonism was seeking to build. People need structure and accountability. These ideals become more important when an organization is attempting to retain its members, most importantly the second generation of members.

According to Niebuhr the second “generation begin to make the sect a church long before they have arrived at the years of discretion” (19). This is because “the sect must take on the character of an educational and disciplinary institution, with the purpose

of bringing the new generation into conformity with ideals and customs which have become traditional” (19-20). This means the sect must begin to educate in a more organized and effective manner. JFS and his fellow leaders saw the need for a more organized educational structure for the faith in order to retain the young people and help educate the old. Niebuhr adds that, “it is an educational institution which must seek to train its youthful members to conformity in thought and practice” (18).

In order to do this Mormonism needed a more unified structure for its educational system. Every member, young or old, needed to learn the faith the same way, and with the same points being emphasized. Members needed to understand the doctrines and principle of the faith, so they could teach them to one another. Mormonism at the turn of the twentieth century started to develop a set pattern for its weekly meetings and theological education.

The lack of an organized plan for the education of the members in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led some groups to teach a variety of things. There were reports of young men’s priesthood groups teaching theology half the time and contemporary literature, like *The Jungle Book* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, the other half (Hartley 138). All groups needed to be teaching the same things in order for the faith to control the message being sent out. Standardizing education was another method of controlling the image and perception of the faith.

Unlike many other religions, the Mormon leadership is not formally trained. Members do not go to school to become a bishop or any other leader; offices are not even voluntary. All levels of leadership are by appointment. Because there was no formal training, the education of the leadership, both on a religious and secular level, varied.

This variation of education was a massive problem, especially on a local level. Many members in small communities in the West were very uneducated.

The problem was not only about education, it was also about commitment to the cause and refuting false teachings. JFS and his leadership wanted the doctrines of the faith to be known and taught the same way throughout the faith. They needed to control what was being taught in order to do this. They could not let people teach outside the narrative the faith was presenting of what Mormonism was supposed to be. Controlling this narrative started with controlling the education of their priesthood body.

In Mormonism the priesthood governs the faith on all levels. Only men hold the priesthood. Improper education of the young men in the social and theological traditions of Mormonism jeopardized the quality of the future leadership. The Mormon hierarchy did not want the young men to become disenchanted with Mormonism; education needed to be a top priority.

JFS was very worried about the priesthood body. He wanted the men of the faith to understand their duties more fully, so they could teach the young men. He said in a conference in 1906, “We expect to see the day, if we live long enough, when every council of the Priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will understand its duty, will assume its own responsibility, [and] will magnify its calling” (J.F. Smith, “Opening Address” *Seventy-Sixth* 3). During a conference in April 1908, JFS again expressed his desire for the priesthood to understand their responsibilities. He asked them to be active in the “communities in which they dwell” and be mindful of the young men (J.F. Smith, “Opening Address” *Seventy-Eighth* 5-6).

To combat these fears, JFS and his leadership started to reorganize the educational structure for the priesthood. In 1908, JFS set up the General Priesthood Committee on Outlines, to write the weekly lesson manuals for all priesthood quorums, except the Quorum of Seventy (Prince and Wright 141). At the first meeting of the new committee, Stephen L Richards, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said a “lack of having a general plan to follow” may have discouraged many priesthood leaders from teaching at their best (qtd. in Hartley 141). This committee started the practice of having weekly priesthood meetings and developed weekly lessons for each priesthood quorum. A stake priesthood meeting was to be held every month, as well. These monthly meetings were to instruct the teachers and leaders of each group on the teaching plan for the next month.

This priesthood correlation at the turn of the twentieth century had a vast impact on the whole faith, not just the young men. Priesthood meetings became a normal part of the weekly schedule. More organized record keeping for all priesthood groups began, as well as the process in which to keep these records. Local missionary work began on the stake level. Yearly teaching manuals were produced for all groups, as well as group teacher training. Overall, there was better communication between all priesthood groups and leadership from the youngest deacon to the president (Hartley 154-155).

In 1912, JFS established a “Correlation Committee” with the goal to “survey the curricula of all organizations” (Prince and Wright 141). This committee was organized to try and get the women’s, the young women’s, and the children’s groups unified with the priesthood groups in their weekly lessons. Once the priesthood was uniform, JFS wanted uniformity throughout all of the organizations. Despite the fact that the committee

worked tirelessly, unified correlation between all organizations was not fully realized during the JFS Presidency (141). The work this committee accomplished did help lead the way for the complete harmony and correlation that would happen in the coming decades. Through this committee, JFS helped put the modern Church on the path to total correlation on all levels.

A formalized educational system was very important to JFS. While president he helped with the formation of many educational programs in the faith. JFS was responsible for starting the Mormon seminary program. The Mormon seminary program is not like the seminaries other faiths have, that trains their clergy. This is a program where the young people of the faith attend a Sunday school like class every day of the week. This program ultimately became the “foundation” of the current “Church Education System” which includes multiple universities and institutions (*Teachings* 313).

JFS believed proper teaching and education would raise the Mormon people to a higher degree. He fought against the idea that Mormonism was “opposed to education” (Clark, *Messages* 4:146). JFS argued that Utah was “Dotted with free schools, academies, colleges and Universities” (146). He once said, “Knowledge is a means of eternal progress” (147). JFS believed knowledge is power, and he wanted his people to think the same way.

Having freed themselves of many of their past burdens, Mormons started to grow at the turn of the twentieth century. Modern Mormonism is recognized for building temples, being financially secure, and having a large body of members all over the world. Mormonism did not decline in the face of all the changes it had to undertake. In fact, Mormonism has steadily continued to grow.

Mormonism did not have a clear institutional identity before JFS's administration. His administration helped build the modern Mormon identity by adding a better educational system, infrastructure, and organization to the faith. JFS worked hard to build a clearer organizational and denominational structure for the faith. He succeeded in doing this, as well as building a physical infrastructure for the future of Mormonism. JFS was a visionary leader and saw the changes that needed to be made, for the betterment of the faith, and its future.

This phase of growth and organization marked the ending of the developmental period in Mormonism. The modern period had now begun. Mormonism was no longer a sect, it had now become a denominational church. The all-encompassing identity Mormons have in relation to their institution started in this period. Gone were the days when members taught whatever they wanted, and organized their own groups and auxiliaries however they saw fit. The Mormon Church had now become an organization built on consistency and stability.

## Conclusion

At the Semiannual General Conference of the Mormon Church held in April 1907, the First Presidency arranged for an address to be read aloud to the members of the faith (J. Fielding Smith, *Essentials* 632). This address, called “An Address to the World,” was written by JFS and his counselors in the First Presidency, and was meant to reveal Mormonism’s position on many important issues that had been brought up during the Reed Smoot hearings. It was also a response “to numerous magazine articles” that had come out in recent years attacking the faith (632). The First Presidency had the document read aloud to the congregation by Orson F. Whitney, a member of the Quorum of the twelve apostles.

The document begins by stating, “In answer to the charges made against us, for ourselves and for those who, under divine direction, founded our religion and our Church ... and before mankind [we] ... declare the truth” (Presidency, “An Address” 3). It explained that the Church will not let the world dictate how it is perceived, and for what it is known. The First Presidency wrote, “We refuse to be bound by the interpretations which others place upon our beliefs; or by what they allege must be the practical consequences of our doctrines” (Presidency, “An Address” 15). The Church desired to control the message going out about the faith. It proclaims, we are different, but we will

tell the world how we are different. The Bureau of Information, the acquisition of historic sites, and the new more organized curriculum for teaching in the faith, all pointed to a greater control of the message going out. Now, the Mormons will tell the world what they believe, not the other way around. “We are to be judged by our own interpretations, and by our actions, not by the logic of others, as to what is, or may be, the result of our faith” (15).

JFS and his counselors used this document to connect the faith with Christianity. Although theologically different faiths, Mormons and Christians share similar values and beliefs. They state, “The religion of this people is pure Christianity.” They continue, “Its theology is based on the doctrines of the Redeemer” (Presidency, “An Address” 3). Mormons would spend a great deal of time in the twentieth century trying to build bridges of understanding with other faiths. This is part of the assimilation process. Mormonism assimilated economically, politically, and even socially; now it was trying to build an understanding on a theological level. The Mormon leadership would confine many of their more controversial – or strange to the outside observer – practices to their temples, while promoting more easily understood doctrines. This document is the beginning of this rhetoric.

The document also ties Mormon history to American history. JFS and the First Presidency expressed the faith’s new historical perspective and its connection to the East Coast. They explained how many of the early Mormon converts were descendants of the pilgrims and puritans: “Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other leaders among the Latter-day Saints, traced their lineage to the founders and first defenders of the nation” (Presidency, “An Address” 5). They wanted the American people to know that many

Mormons had come from the same heritage as most Americans, both on a physical and religious level. American heritage is Mormon heritage, American at its core. This was a continuation of the Church's new historical narrative, connecting it to the history of the country and not separating from it.

The economic and social power of the Mormon hierarchy was also addressed. The Church's leadership "emphatically deny" that Mormonism's "aims are temporal rather than spiritual; that it dictates its members in their industrial activities and relations, and aims at absolute domination in temporal affairs" (Presidency, "An Address" 8). The faith no longer had complete power in Utah, and wanted the world to know it. This Address confronts directly the fears of anti-Mormon writers like Josiah Strong: "We deny the existence of arbitrary power in the Church" (8). The Mormons were no longer seeking an independent kingdom and temporal power. Mormonism was becoming a denominational style church, and leaving behind its days as a break away sect. "The sect may challenge the authority of the state, but the church as an accommodation group must accept it and fit it into its ethical and doctrinal scheme" (Niebuhr 129).

Proclaiming the Church's support of another key American value, this document declared that the Mormons stand for the "absolute separation of Church and state" and "the absolute freedom of the individual from the domination of ecclesiastical authority in political affairs; the equality of all churches before the law" (Presidency, "An Address" 14). The faith will not interfere with politics and will encourage the electoral process to be "conducted as in other parts of the Union" (14). The Church will not vote as a bloc, or try to influence how its members vote. Utah will follow the same system and protocols as

all the other states in the union. This effort again ties to the Americanization and assimilation the faith was going through at the turn of the twentieth century.

JFS and his counselors then affirm Mormon loyalty to the American government. They state that their loyalty is greater than any animosity or anger they may have over previous government attacks and sanctions. They wrote, “We declare that these sentiments, this loyalty, have outlived the memory of all the wrongs inflicted upon our fathers and ourselves” (Presidency, “An Address” 10). This attitude goes along with JFS’s promotion of peace and forgiveness. He wanted the Church to officially let go of the past for the sake of the future.

This document also restated Mormonism’s official stance on polygamy. It notes that the Utah community had not recently been in any “violation of anti-polygamy laws” and that the community should not be punished for actions of the “individuals” that have broken these laws (Presidency, “An Address” 12). JFS and his Presidency admit, “A religious conviction existed among the people holding this order of marriage to be divinely sanctioned” (12). It should not be surprising that there are some “over-zealous” people in the community still seeking to practice this law, but the numbers are few (12).

JFS and his counselors defined the modern Church with this statement: “Mormonism is in the world for the world’s good. Teaching truth, inculcating morality, guarding the purity of the home, honoring authority and government, fostering education, and exalting men and women” (Presidency, “An Address” 15). They explain that “there is nothing” in Mormonism “that calls for execration, no matter how widely in some respects they may differ from your conceptions of religious truth” (16). Despite

theological differences, there is no need for misunderstandings and persecutions. Mormonism was no longer in opposition to the greater society, the faith had now abandoned this sect like philosophy. Mormonism was now trying to build a better understanding with the outside world. Near the end they wrote, “We desire to live in peace and confidence with our fellow citizens of all political parties and of all religions” (14). Over the next century, Mormonism would live up to this statement.

This document is a statement of not only who Mormons were, but who they were trying to become. It identifies the misconceptions about the faith, and the steps the Church was taking to change them. JFS was telling the world, this is what we believe, and this is our identity. In this document he defines the modern Mormon identity. He declares that everything the world thought we were is gone. The modern Church is now separated from the local government. Its members have political freedom. There is no more polygamy. Mormons now live in harmony with the rest of the country.

In the nineteenth century, Mormon identity was defined by polygamy, communal life, debt, persecution, and disorganization. By the end of JFS’s administration all these elements were no longer applicable. The Mormon faith was now monogamist, capitalist, debt free, organized on nearly all levels, and free of any large-scale persecution. Today, this identity is so firmly established that many members of the Church have little historical understanding of their very different past. Born and raised within the faith’s paradigm, established at the turn of the twentieth century, Mormons have forgotten past conflicts and disagreements. The Mormon Church was clearly in the pre-paradigm sect phase for most of the nineteenth century. Consolidation of theology, the letting go of controversial teachings, and the organization of the institution as a whole, put the faith

into the phase of normal science, or according to Niebuhr's theory the denominational church phase. The Mormon denominational paradigm was fully developed once this stage began.

The Mormon faith has continued building on what happened in this period. Kuhn said, "Normal science . . . is predicated on the assumption that the scientific community knows what the world is like" (5). The establishing of manuals of theology, the doctrinal clarifications, and even further revelations that JFS introduced to the faith during his presidency gave the Mormon people confidence that their leadership "knows what the world is like." JFS helped bring a standard of faith and dogma to the Mormon people. Mormonism was also no longer a sect because it was becoming one with the values of contemporary society. Mormonism "sacrificed its ethical rigorousness in compromise with the policies of governments and nobilities." (Niebuhr 33).

The faith's core values theologically and socially have stayed the same since this period. What defines the Mormons as a people has remained the same. Kuhn say that normal science is not meant to "call forth new sorts of phenomena" or "invent new theories" (Kuhn 24). It is a time for the "articulation of those phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies" (24). The Church is not looking to change in the modern era, only build on what it already has established.

The last phase in Kuhn's theory is the phase of scientific revolution, when paradigms shift. Mormonism has yet to see this phase on a Church wide level. The only incident that could be seen as a paradigm shift in the faith since the turn of the twentieth century was the admission of black men into the Mormon priesthood in 1978. Besides this, no major theological or social change has happened in the faith since the Presidency

of JFS. The Mormon identity has remained the same since this time. Some fundamentalist sects have, however, broken off of the main body, showing that Mormonism has completed Niebuhr's cycle.

These separatist polygamous sects today argue, as did President Joseph Smith Jr. in the nineteenth century, that the Mormon Church has been corrupted. And in some ways this charge is accurate. As stated before, "no ideal can be incorporated without the loss of some of its ideal character" (Niebuhr 4). While transitioning to the denominational church structure Mormonism did compromise some of its ideals. In doing so it allowed itself to align with mainstream religion and survive the transition into the modern world. This allowed the faith to grow and expand in ways it may never have without these compromises.

JFS may not have planned and thought out some of these changes. Scholar Kathleen Flake points out, "Like most historical actors, Smith was subject to his share of ironic results and unintended consequences" (Flake 169). But Flake clearly acknowledges JFS's pivotal role in the development of modern Mormonism. "Nevertheless and notwithstanding," she notes, "events during the administration of Joseph F. Smith ... remain key to understanding the present shape and success of the L.D.S. Church" (169). Not everything was planned perfectly, but his presidency gave the world the paradigm and the identity of the Modern Mormon.

On November 18, 1918, JFS died of pleuropneumonia. Although no open funeral was held due to the influenza problem in Salt Lake, thousands gathered in the streets to watch his body pass by on its way to the city cemetery (J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 479). Many people, even people against him in life, expressed positive feelings about the man

after his death. A newspaper editor in Salt Lake named Charles C. Goodwin, who had been in opposition to the Mormons for many years, paid respect in his paper. He wrote, “No matter how men may have differed with him on various questions, his opponents always conceded that all of his acts were marked by an honesty of purpose, a feeling of consideration for others” (qtd. in J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 483). The Salt Lake Tribune, a paper historically against the Mormons, also praised JFS for his strong leadership. It stated, “He will be missed by all classes of citizens because, after all is said and done, he was very much a man, with the courage of his convictions and a sincere affection for his followers” (qtd. in J. Fielding Smith, *Life* 484).

Today JFS is still revered. The fifteenth president of the Mormon Church, Gordon B. Hinckley, said of him, “It is my opinion that no man, save the Prophet Joseph only, has had a greater and better understanding of the origin and history of the Church and of its doctrines ... There have been other great exponents, but I think none has had a broader or deeper understanding” (“Remarks”). In 2012, the BYU Church History Symposium was dedicated to JFS and his role in Mormonism. One of the current Mormon Apostles, M. Russell Ballard, spoke about JFS. He said, “No leader has been more beloved as an Apostle, President of the Church, by members and strangers alike ... he moved the Church forward under extreme difficulties.” Talking about his teachings he said, “He made the plan of salvation clear and understandable.” Above all, he was a “practical visionary and builder” (BYU Religious Education).

JFS’s role in building the Mormon denominational paradigm, and helping bring Mormonism in the modern period is becoming more recognized as time passes. He was a living example of the past and the future of his faith. JFS helped change Mormonism and

its role in society forever. Above all, the main thing that stands out about the man was his ability to teach Mormonism in an easily understandable way. He was not a complicated man and taught the gospel in an uncomplicated way. His common-sense approach helped Mormonism become a powerful denominational church, something many of his detractors thought would never happen.

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