

BIOPOLITICS AND BELIEF: GOVERNANCE IN THE CHURCH  
OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST AND THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Biopolitics and Belief: Governance in the Church of Christ, Scientist, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation offers an analysis of two American religions—the Church of Christ, Scientist (CS), and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)—and the ways that their particular/peculiar ideologies regarding the body govern the everyday realities of their respective memberships. Biopower is the political power used to control bodies and bodily actions, such as the care of oneself, and the details of personal family life. Belief can act as an especially powerful agent of biopolitical power as it inspires a lived faithfulness through its various theologies. What is more, the effects of biopolitical belief are often complicated by the mixed interests of Church and State, leaving the territory of the individual body a disputed claim.

To better understand these disputes, this project utilizes a Foucaultian interpretation of the CS and LDS churches to better understand the roots of the biopolitical conflicts they confront. Specifically, the histories and contemporary practices of these religious organizations are analyzed through a genealogical method, using Foucaultian interpretations of the biopolitical, pastoral, and psychiatric powers they use to effectively govern the minds, bodies, and spirits of their people. A historical background of the CS and LDS churches traces the emergence of the biopolitical practices of each group by evaluating their groundedness in their current social-political milieus, and by making connections between their respective religious beliefs, practices, and government and the broader Jacksonian American political culture into which they

were born. Additionally, this particular form of analysis poses important questions for the study of religion and politics today. Although most of the examples used in this study are historical, both the LDS and CS churches continue to hold on to many if not all of the theologies and doctrines which historically brought them into conflict with the US government. What has changed is not the belief itself, but the embodiment of it, and also the state and federal government reaction to it. Therefore, the theological histories and founding stories of these religions remain relevant to their contemporary status as extra-statal biopolitical forces within the US today.

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## **Preface**

The basic questions this dissertation asks are about governance, faith, and power. In particular, with regard to the everyday life of an individual, where does public/secular governance end and private/spiritual governance begin, and, in what ways does religious government set/define/negotiate these boundaries and appropriate standards for behavior in each sector? To answer these questions, I look to the cases of the Church of Christ, Scientist, and the LDS church. Because of my close personal connection to one of these faiths, I feel the need to begin with a private disclosure. The research presented in the following study is intensely personal to me, and because personal attachments can affect objectivity, I admit that this is something I have struggled with at times. I am a devout member of the LDS church, and have little interest in removing myself completely from that perspective. It is from this particular standpoint that I gain much of my academic as well as personal curiosity in the subject. My journey through academia to this particular area of research is deeply personal and has been guided by my own efforts to sort out my place as an LDS woman scholar. As I progressed through my graduate studies, I felt the stretching of my identity as I worked harder and harder to reconcile the academic knowledge I was gaining with my deeply-seated spiritual ideals of truth. Perhaps not surprisingly, it was as I was studying feminism and religion that I realized that the problems I met in my lived experience were also worthy of critical scholarly attention. And so I began to put together a program of research that would allow me to combine my academic interest in political theory with my personal fascination with faith and the power of belief.

My experience as a member of the LDS church gives me an insider's perspective which is complemented by my critical scholarly approach. Because of my intimate knowledge of LDS beliefs, practices, and resources for study, I have been able to put together what I believe is a thorough and well-rounded analysis of the faith. An additional advantage gained by this association is that I have used my knowledge of the LDS church as a starting point for my investigation of Christian Science. This type of interpretation may reveal an unconscious bias by inspiring the kinds of questions I have asked and the specific avenues I have pursued. Still, I believe that my own recognition of the possibility of bias has encouraged me to redouble my efforts at truly understanding and appreciating the Christian Science faith as an insider would.

All of this curiosity does not equal expertise, however. Despite my personal familiarity with the LDS faith and my best efforts to study Christian Science, I must admit that I continue to be mystified by both religions because the more carefully I study Christian Science and Mormonism, the more unreachable they become. This is because their theologies and systems of governance prove to be more complex than they may first appear. Christian Science is not simply about healing: it is a completely different system of being in and experiencing the world, truly a city all its own with an unfamiliar language and culture. It is not easy to acclimate oneself to the fundamental differences that pervade the most intimate and inane details of everyday life, and as I visited with Christian Scientists in Boston and in my own town, I found this to be the case. Try as I might to make it otherwise, as an outsider even my best understanding of Christian Science is less than complete. The same problem manifests itself differently in my study of my own religion. As I attempt to view Mormonism from the standpoint of a critical

observer, I uncover layers of knowledge that complicate my personal understanding and encourage me to push my analysis even further. Introducing various political theories into the mix—especially critical theories such as Foucault’s—adds another layer of complexity to this study. Such limitations are certainly daunting. However, my persistent bafflement is always accompanied by an increased curiosity. My personal interest drives my own need to know, appreciate, and understand, and I believe that my study has ultimately benefited from it. If anything, my personal religious affiliation has only increased my interest in my topic of research, expanded my access to historical documents of the CS and LDS, and fueled my determination to make this study unbiased as fully as possible.

Although the impetus for this project was my own private struggle, the following analysis adheres to strict scholarly standards of methodology and critique. When I appear critical of either Christian Science or the LDS church, I am only following the questions (suggested by those institutions) where they lead. In fact, while my constant questioning of the power of belief may suggest otherwise, the answers I discovered only led me to a more faithful understanding of the significance of religion in everyday life.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **Introduction: The Politics of Embodied Belief**

What, precisely, are the intersections of governance and religious authority when it comes to the minds, bodies, and spirits of America's faithful? In what ways does a group or individual quest for spiritual perfection or bodily preparation affect the function and perceived role of the secular government? To answer these questions, this project utilizes a Foucaultian framework of power (in its biopolitical, pastoral, and psychiatric forms) to analyze two new religious movements born in the US—the LDS church, and the Church of Christ, Scientist, (Christian Science or CS) which has its own struggles with government over its particular method of providing health care to its membership—to better understand the root of the biopolitical conflicts they confront. Specifically, the histories and contemporary practices of these religious organizations are analyzed using Foucaultian interpretations of the biopolitical, pastoral, and psychiatric powers they use to effectively govern the minds, bodies, and spirits of their people. The following story of a fundamentalist sect of the LDS church presents several of the issues involved in these conflicts.

In April 2008, Texas resident Willie Jessop wrote a letter to the President of the United States, claiming that an act of terrorism had been instigated against his community by state officials “operating under the guise of ‘protecting the public’” (“FLDS Leader Decries 'Terrorist Acts' in Letter to Bush," 2008). The act, according to him, constituted “the ultimate deception” of innocents by state power. “We are talking about homes being broken into without search warrants, unarmed fathers being forced to the ground with M16 rifles pointed at their heads, screaming children being torn from the arms of their

grief-stricken mothers,” he said, “all upon American soil and within your own home state of Texas” (“FLDS Leader Decries 'Terrorist Acts' in Letter to Bush," 2008).

Jessop was referring to raids on the polygamous sect of the the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (FLDS), located at the community they called the Yearning for Zion Ranch near Eldorado, Texas. In an attempt to remove alleged child abusers, state police entered the private compound and separated mothers from children, resulting in the “cries and wails of heartsick mothers and screams of terrified children as a vast cortege of attendants swarmed the arena, tearing screaming children from their weeping mothers and physically carrying them away” (“FLDS Leader Decries 'Terrorist Acts' in Letter to Bush," 2008). A mother of four children who were taken from her during the raid said “[t]he state of Texas has taken away a whole community of children and withheld their parents from them on an allegation from outside... We have been persecuted for our religion. We are being treated like the Jews were when they were escorted to the German Nazi camps” (Naler, 2008).

Over the years, the FLDS, like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) from which they stem, have been embattled with the state over the ways that their respective religions choose to govern the bodies, culture, and practice of their memberships. In the late nineteenth century, the LDS themselves were at the heart of an intense debate over polygamy—what President Lincoln then decried as an “act of barbarism” (O. K. White, 1978; Yancey, 2002). Distrust of this peculiar practice led to the disincorporation of the LDS church and a seizing of its private properties by the federal government in 1890.<sup>1</sup> The LDS church officially gave up the practice of

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<sup>1</sup> The disincorporation of the LDS church was settled by the Supreme Court case *The Late Corporation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States* (136 US 1).

polygamy months later, and within 6 years Utah was granted statehood (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004). But conflicts regarding the biopolitical government of the religion remain. Today, although polygamy is no longer accepted by the mainstream LDS, other battlegrounds include their ideologies concerning the overall health and well-being of their people.

In these and other cases, it is the biopolitical actions of the churches that attract government attention. Because the LDS church (and the FLDS as its offshoot) holds to a peculiarly physical theology—one which appears to sacralize the bodies of individual members—the doctrines and practices of its people can be (and often are) interpreted as contrary to state and federal aims of government. For example, in the above stated instances, the practice of polygamy—where one man takes more than one wife—sparked intense criticism from the outside and prompted quick and severe action from government. In these and similar controversies, the bodily practices of US citizens become a public matter. Marriage, health care, and the treatment of children become the concern of federal government as it sees fit, because it has an interest in the physical well-being and procreation of its population. The result of such practices is that religious freedom for many is limited to belief only, as bodily demonstrations of such belief are often frowned upon as being obscene, dangerous, or otherwise abnormal.

The analysis presented in this dissertation poses important questions for the study of religion and politics today. Although most of the examples used in this study are historical, both the LDS and CS churches continue to hold on to many if not all of the theologies and doctrines which historically brought them into conflict with the US government. What has changed is not the belief, but the embodiment of it, and also the

state and federal government reaction to it. Therefore, the theological histories and founding stories of these religions remain relevant to their contemporary status as extra-statal biopolitical forces within the US today.

This is not to say, of course, that the intent of the CS or LDS is to exceed state authority on even the most mundane aspects of conducting everyday living. However, both groups continue to be led and inspired by their visions of a heavenly city which is in this world but not of it (Colossians 2:8), and so not subject to its particular regulations and authority. They seek for Zion, or “the City of God”, a place where God himself is the ultimate authority and the cares of the world disappear.<sup>2</sup> While their visions of Zion differ in ideology as well as geography, both groups firmly believe that their own efforts can get them into paradise, and that paradise can and will exist in the here and now.

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<sup>2</sup> For both the CS and LDS, Zion is about living with God (either figuratively or literally) on Earth. As Augustine suggested in the fourth century A.D., the distinctions between the a life in God’s presence and a life according to Man’s rules make it such that loyalties cannot easily be divided. The City of God and the City of Man constitute contradictory values, he says, because they “have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self” (2000, p. 477). The precepts of each have not only spiritual, but also temporal, physical, and decidedly political consequences: “In the one, the princes and the nations it subdues are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obeying, while the former take thought for all” (2000, p. 477). The princes or ruling governments of each city necessarily differ in motivation, style, and execution, with correlative effects on their various populations. Augustine’s theory, then, marks an early fascination with the biopolitics of a theology that exalts man’s spiritual nature above his bodily appetites. In fact, Augustine himself struggled with the physiological conflict between his previous life as an adulterous heathen and his new life as a holy celibate.

Although Augustine uses “cities” as metaphors for either “Godly” or “worldly” living, his own testimony in *Confessions* (1998) exemplifies how a single individual may himself alternately be the prince of one city or the other in his own personal life—choosing to shape his own conduct with either the spirit or passion in charge. His neo-Platonist perspective poses timeless dilemmas: flesh versus spirit; mind versus matter; happiness versus virtue. These and other similar conflicts continue to trouble the thoughts of many residing in man’s city today. Those who are lucky enough to aspire to living for the City of God find that the location nullifies such contentions. Hence, the contradictions between flesh, spirit, mind, matter, happiness, and virtue all are sanctified and justified as one’s perspective is elevated. Because of its potential for peace, the City of God becomes a desirable aspiration not only for those who wish to be saints, but also for those who wish to be freed from the struggles of temporal, political, physical life in the City of Man. God’s City is not only a metaphorical ending-point, it is also a real “haven in a heartless world” for scores of searchers and believers (Lasch, 1977).

These Zion-dreams work to inspire real action on the part of the faithful, and at times create a sort of ambivalence to secular law.

A historical background of the CS and LDS churches traces the emergence of the ideal cities for each group by evaluating their groundedness in their current social-political milieus, and by making connections between their respective religious beliefs, practices, and government and the broader Jacksonian American political culture into which they were born. These historical backgrounds demonstrate unwavering commitments to evolving definitions of heaven-on-earth, which create, in turn, a political mythology tied to the desire to find/found the City of God in the midst of the American state.

This uniquely American “Zionist” impulse is juxtaposed against the power of the US secular government (which seeks after its own interests, and clings to its own myth of “chosenness”), and it remains strong today in the hearts and minds of individuals who yearn for one locality, but find themselves subject to the (physical and constitutional) laws, cultural mores, and behavioral expectations of the other. How does the desire for God’s city manifest itself in the minds and bodies of some United States citizens today? What are the biopolitical effects of such a search for alternative civil government as well as systems of/for life which claim primary allegiance to a higher law? Millions of Americans today in the CS and LDS churches struggle to be loyal citizens of both the City of God and the City of Man. Their particular tactics for bridging an orderly everyday life between the two are political compromises with repercussions for action and ideology in both spheres. The following sections outline the theory and methodology which guide this analysis.

## **Theoretical Grounding**

### *Power in the Private Sphere*

Power, like politics and government, is not only manifest in secular affairs. The City of God must be governed, after all, and various strategies and expressions of power enforce its higher law. In what particular ways is power manifest in the Christian Science and LDS churches, and how, when, where, and why does it operate in them? Firstly, power is not a gift that is given for some to wield and others to fear. It cannot exist in a single, solitary individual. In order for it to have any meaning at all, power relies on relationships. It means nothing to say that one is powerful in the abstract—only that one is powerful in relation to others. Therefore, an individual cannot truly be “powerful” in this sense. The perception of power in any given context involves a complex series of relations and influences. This is not to say that power does not exist. On the contrary, it is everywhere existent, in and around relationships of men and women, rich and poor, old and young. Power, in its infinitesimal threads of being and chains of relation, is no respecter of persons. According to Foucault,

power is never something that someone possesses, any more than it is something that emanates from someone. Power does not belong to anyone or even to a group; there is only power because there is dispersion, relays, networks, reciprocal supports, differences of potential, discrepancies, etcetera. It is in this system of differences, which have to be analyzed, that power can start to function. (2006, paragraph 7)

In the case of this study, what “have to be analyzed” are the dispersions, networks, supports, and discrepancies of faith and theology as productive power, or power that

produces a new type of citizen, with new and distinctive relationships to secular government and new systems of navigating the shadow-land territory between the City of Man and the City of God.

Foucault reasons that the “apparatus of power” is a “productive instance of discursive practice” (2006, p. 13). So, in an analysis of power, one must begin by asking what the apparatus of power looks like, how it functions, where it comes from, and what kinds of discursive practices it produces. In other words, what are the causes and effects of power relations of a specific kind? What produces the power relations, and what do they, in turn, produce? For Foucault, power has a special relationship with truth, what he calls the “game of truth” or the “discourse of truth”. The application of certain relations of power cause discourses of truth to be taken as actual, infallible Truth. Knowledge and power are therefore bound together in relations of power (Foucault, 1980, 2006). Truth and knowledge are two significant products of the productive power of religion. Thus, one important question becomes: “How can this deployment of power, these tactics and strategies of power, give rise to assertions, negations, experiments, and theories, in short to a game of truth?” (2006, p. 13). In CS and the LDS, the effects of various strategies of power are each dependent on the separate influence of personal belief. Belief and truth each inform one another because they are inseparable in the lived practice of the individual faithful.

There are a few things that can be said for power in general, according to Foucault. The first is that it is a “procedure of individualization, the individual is the only effect of power” (2006, p. 13). Specific regimes of truth and knowledge produce effects on individuals—and it is only through individuals that their effects are known. This is

not to say that power directly “produces” individuals, at least not one power directly. However, perhaps we may consider for a moment that individuals do not merely feel the effects of power, but are, in fact, produced by the myriad interactions of various strategies and tactics of power which define the course of everyday living.<sup>3</sup> Power works on individuals and between individuals (this is true both in faith and in fact). Even a state’s power can be reduced to the relations between its individual actors and those individuals on whom they act. By this definition, power must touch the individual, in effect, *producing* him/her by creating certain standards for belief and behavior. In the case of the CS and LDS, the result is a new citizen peculiarly fit for life in the City-of-God-on-Earth, and perhaps consequently unfit to be governed by the gentile, non-Christian Scientist City of Man.

As power molds new types of individuals, it also marks their bodies. The second thing that Foucault says is essential of power is that “ultimately its point of application is always the body. All power is physical, and there is a direct connection between the body and political power” (2006, p. 14). The most physical power is the power of discipline, where body and power meet (2006, p. 42). Specifically, disciplinary power is “a particular modality by which political power” influences the body by “taking actions, behavior, habits, and words into account” (2006, p. 40). Disciplinary power works on individuals, and commonly uses the gaze as a tactic.<sup>4</sup> Disciplinary power also works on the body through corporal punishment. Even when the intent is not to hurt the subject, physical coercion can influence an individual’s motivation to modify her own behavior.

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<sup>3</sup> This is the case even though sovereign power “is a form of power without an individualizing function.” (Foucault, 2006, p. 46). The sovereign does not concern itself with the people on the level of the individual, but in order for the multiplicity to be under its power, the individual must as well.

<sup>4</sup> The gaze is a form of surveillance, which Foucault bases on Bentham’s panoptic prison (1997a).

Therefore, even disciplinary power is productive in the sense that it is able to produce a “new” person—sanctified, holy, cleansed, ready to live in the heavenly city. The body—glorified or nullified—is an essential asset to one who would be prepared for the heavenly-city in man’s territory.

Although it is the aggregate influence of a number of intricately interwoven forms of power with their various strategies and tactics that ultimately shape the new citizen of the City of God, certain types are particularly noteworthy in the cases of the CS and LDS religions. Among these are the types of power which involve “managing the population ... in depth, in all its fine points and details” (Foucault, 2007b, p. 107), such as biopolitical, psychiatric, and pastoral power. The “fine points and details” are the bastions of everyday life. The most effective methods of governance do not focus only on the prince or the territory it claims; they recognize the importance of the role of the people, the individual, and the individual mind and body. By looking inward to the population and the details of the way it conducts every day life, certain strategies of power are able to control nearly every facet of a population. The chapters that follow are primarily intended to provide theoretical grounds for later considerations of the ways in which the alternative cities presented by the CS and LDS are constituted, by what authority, and with what influence. Additionally, this analysis considers the influence that various disciplinary realities (working as systems of truth) have on individual behavior.

#### *Governance Separate from Government*

At its most fundamental level, the role of *government* is to lead, guide, and care for its citizens (Foucault, 2007b, p. 121). This includes a imperative to care for the

biopolitical concerns of its people, such as their health, well-being, and procreation (Foucault, 2007b, 2008). *Governance* is a more contested term. For some, traditional governance is simply steering, and needs no further definition (Bovens, 1990; Peters, 2000; Rose, 1978). For others, governance must produce practical change and demonstrate “the capacity... to make and implement policy—in other words, to steer society” (Pierre & Peters, 2000, p. 1). By these definitions, the essence of governance is not strictly limited to its relationship with formal state government. In fact, governance may also occur in social, religious, or private relations. According to Gamble (2000, p. 110), although

[g]overnance denotes the steering capacities of a political system...[it] is not the exclusive preserve of government. To govern means to influence, shape, regulate, or determine outcomes, and in this sense there are many other agencies and institutions that are involved in governing a social order.

When considered in this light, governance can be the political tool of any organization or individual who seeks to persuade. And because governance—the steering of individual choice—is often already political, and its specific use is one manifestation of politics, political action extends beyond the realm of state government.

Furthermore, according to Foucault, governance must necessarily come from both external discipline and internal self-regulation (1993). Clarifying this point, he says, “governing people ...is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which ensure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself” (Foucault, 1993, p. 204). In other words, the

interactions between various forms of power acting on an individual (from within and without) combine into one single governmental force, which in turn creates new subjects and subjectivities. By this definition, religious groups such as Christian Science and the LDS church *govern* their memberships by their own authority, as well as by the force of the individual minds and spirits of the faithful. Of course, this fact itself does not make them any different from most other religious groups in the US. However, the strategies and tactics of governance implemented by the CS and LDS churches, coupled with their particular theologies regarding the role of the physical in the quest for the spiritual, make them exceptional sites for the study of governance from the private-religious sphere over human existence as well as the public-secular sphere—their biopolitical practices and (literally) embodied belief test the secular US system.

#### *Politics and Power in Private Life*

If *governance* describes the way an individual or institution guides the lives of individuals, or is able to change their values, behaviors or practices, *politics* may be thought of as describing the movement of the individuals themselves. According to Aristotle, because man, by nature, builds cities, he is necessarily a political animal (1984, p. 1253 a). This, he reasons, must be true because cities themselves cannot exist separate from politics. The city for Aristotle requires political governance, including those who are by their individual natures and morality inherently qualified to govern. Others are given roles as supporters, laborers, or farmers—but all must answer to the politics established by the few. This rule is established by nature, and is true whether the city is spiritual or secular. Simply stated, politics determine who is in power, and “who gets what, when, and how” (Laswell, 1936). Other definitions similarly describe politics as

“the art and science of government” (Schattschneider, 1960) or “patterns of power, rule, and authority” (Dahl, 1956)—both of which are established, in the Aristotelian sense, by man’s natural dominion. Politics, therefore, operate in and through those who govern.

An alternative perspective is offered by Foucault, who views politics as intimately coupled with power relations. According to him, defining the realm of the political is a complicated effort which involves the study of political power as it operates in the hidden details of everyday life—precisely those areas which some more limited definitions (Caporaso & Levine, 1992, p. 11) would ignore. Foucault says,

...I think that in madness, in derangement, in behavior problems, there are reasons for questioning politics; and politics must answer these questions, but it never answers them completely....The same is true of sexuality: it doesn’t exist apart from a relationship to political structures, requirements, laws, and regulations that have a primary importance for it... (Rabinow, 1997, p. 114)

For Foucault, the most interesting examinations of power at work are involved in the seemingly “unpolitical”—the family, the body, and the spirit. Once the definition of what is political is broadened this way, Foucault suggests that a different perspective is needed. He says that the politicizing of the private sphere requires “thinking about the relations of these different experiences to politics”. This is important because, “[t]he problems that experiences like these pose to politics have to be elaborated” (Rabinow, 1997, p. 114).

Religious organizations such as the CS and LDS churches also “pose problems” to political power as decision-making and as lived experience in private life. The intent

of this study is to not to undertake a religious study of these groups, but a study of in what ways, by what authority, and with what effects they operate as powerful entities in the daily lives of Americans, with special consideration for how these institutions pose political issues for themselves and for the state. Like Foucault, I “ask politics what it [has] to say about the problems with which it is confronted” (p. 115)—especially those that do not appear to be overtly political. The resulting avenues of inquiry shape this analysis.

*Questions for politics.* The situations of these religious organizations within the United States today raise a number of questions. Perhaps most importantly, one wonders: how is it that the CS and LDS religions govern their memberships as they search for Zion? What kind of power does the leader of these organizations hold over his or her flock of followers? How does this kind of government affect the life—and body—of the individual member? And to what extent can these religious governments be understood as counter-statal to their own American context?

Along with these questions comes a second set of queries: If the CS and LDS religions are to be understood as their own extra/counter-statal governments within the existing US constitutional system, how were they able to become and remain such? Have they achieved this status by spiritual design and by political scheming? Is their current position a result of their quest for tolerance or survival? What social, political, or cultural attitudes in the US supported their growth and promoted their unique practices of power? These are not questions often posed of religious groups; however, both the CS and the LDS provide limit cases of biopolitical-religious action which, at times, appears to run contrary to the current US system of government. In their divergences from the ruling

political and social orders, both groups offer practical accommodations for a spiritually-centered life which also meets the necessary, personal demands of everyday living. The answers to these questions, pursued through a genealogical approach, help one to understand and appreciate the relationship Foucault identifies as being “between the pastorate and the government” (2007b, p. 191). For him, the various forms of power implemented by the religious pastor and their effect on individual church members constitute the “essential aspect” of the relationship between religion and politics.

Therefore, following a Foucaultian model, this study simply asks politics what it has to say about these two complicated, marginal, possibly extra/counter/contra-statal, yet distinctly American religions. The answers suggest at least two critical findings: first, that different types of religious belief itself can act as a form of biopolitical power and as such produce a particular type of individual; second, that the temporal and spiritual location of Zion also can be regarded as a cultural project, social community, or political presence within the physical/metaphysical borders of the United States.

## **Methodology**

### *Genealogy*

As the contrast of the “two cities” suggests, I am, like Foucault, “fascinated by the past for the sake of the present” (Haugaard, 1997, p. 44), and it is this fascination which has guided my study. Therefore, in addition to consideration of the political nature of the beliefs and practices of the contemporary CS and LDS churches, I also look to the historical roots of both movements in order to situate today’s “reality” in its genealogical framework. Through a critical appreciation for the past, one can appreciate that social truths are not simply born *ex nihilo*, but are carefully constructed, consciously or not,

through generations of various systems of thought. Through time, and with the help of social, political, and cultural mores, truths emerge that will be accepted *de facto* by generations to come (Tocqueville, 2002). According to Foucault, “emergence”, or the “moment of arising” of a system of belief, “is always produced through a particular stage of forces” (1977, pp. 148-149).

In this particular study, I am most interested in the subjugated realities hidden in the political governments of the CS and LDS. Given the fact that these religious groups participate in the governance of their respective memberships in ways that are decidedly political, certain questions regarding their origins in an American setting—with its values of separation of church and state, and its own peculiar form of secular religion (Bedell, Sandron, & Wellborn, 1982; Bloom, 2006; Holland, 2007) are worth examining. What foundational politics, principles, or priorities made possible the birth of new political systems in what seem to be intensely patriotic groups of citizens? Additionally, how has the role of Zion-as-physical/metaphysical-ideal changed in the more than 100 years since these religions were first established? What are the foundations of a belief that effectively functions as a system of government? And how do these specific forms of belief mark themselves on the bodies of believers? Genealogical method lends itself to the use of a certain narrative approach by freeing the subjects of inquiry to tell their own subjugated histories. Such genealogical confessions, when appreciated along with their theoretical implications, therefore comprise “new” histories of cultural, political, and religious ideology in America.

Foucault often used genealogy as a way to study what society deemed to be “abnormal.” Additionally, much of his work focuses on searching out subtle variations

of a biopolitical form of power. For example, Foucault implements genealogical methodology in his works on madness, prisons, and sexuality—all categories which are simultaneously ignored and taken for granted by society-at-large. In these works, Foucault is critical of concepts or practices that have been artificially “naturalized” or reified through time. He does this by beginning with a description of a contemporary problem and working backward to reveal the messy origins of what seems, at face value, to be an uncomplicated situation. For example, in the *History of Sexuality, Volume 1* (1990), he begins by explaining the current perception of sexuality in the Christian West—namely, that the Victorians were sexually repressed, and that our collective inheritance from them has given us a need to liberate our minds and bodies and finally grant ourselves the freedom to express ourselves as sexual beings. In other words, the perception is that modern conceptions about sex are born from a Victorian reluctance to talk about sex in any way, shape or form. But the irony, according to Foucault, is that “[w]hat is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking it *ad infinitum*, while exploiting it as *the secret*” (1990, p. 35). The rest of the book is dedicated to unraveling the myth of the prudish Victorian in order to sustain an argument that—contrary to being afraid to talk about sex—the Victorians (much like their contemporary progeny) could hardly refrain from doing so. This new understanding of the history of sexuality then allows for an enlightened reconsideration of sexuality—and the politics of the sexual body—today.

By pulling the rug out from underneath conventional norms, Foucault frees his readers to think and act differently. The effect of his critical approach is ultimately liberating because it demystifies the history of the way we are. Additionally, through this

and other works, Foucault brings the politics of the body to the forefront and unveils systems of power relating to various perceptions of the body as spiritual, sexual, defective, or otherwise abnormal. In this study, Foucault's theorizing of the political subjectivity of the body is juxtaposed to the CS and LDS spiritual ideologies that seek to discipline action and re-orient one's perception of the physical.

Specifically, analysis of the emergence of the biopolitical theologies of these religions includes a careful examination of people, politics, and culture of the Jacksonian Era and the fervor of enlightenment which characterized the decades that followed. Perhaps ironically, the CS and LDS faiths appear to be surprisingly mainstream at the moments of their emergence, when they are considered along with the branches of popular American sentiment from which they sprung—although they would soon be cast as “outsiders” to that same culture (Stephen Gottschalk, 1974; Moore, 1986). What is more, the particular Jacksonian focus on the significance of the material world helped to shape the biopolitical theologies of both religions. To emphasize the continuing importance of these findings, through this study I also explore the descent and lineage of both faiths, seek to determine how and when their theology and practice depart from their original ideologies, and to understand how (or if) these changes effect their latent biopolitical theologies. I begin by first studying the CS and LDS in their own histories, then, through an analysis of their doctrine and practice, uncover grounding for their current biopolitical orders. Through this approach, history lends insight into current significance.

*Methods of Research and Analysis*

Foucault's prescription for genealogical work is that it be "meticulous, and patiently documentary" and involve a process which "requires patience and a knowledge of details and ... depends on a vast accumulation of source material" (Foucault, 1977, p. 139 & 140). In keeping with this ideal, research for this project has included contemporary and historical documents relating to the CS and LDS churches, their members and leaders, the Jacksonian Era, the relationship between the US government and religions, political theory, and qualitative methodology. Additionally, I visited the archives of both the Christian Science and Latter-day Saint churches in Boston and Salt Lake City, respectively, attended services and interviewed members of both religions. Primary documents (such as the writings of the founders of CS and the LDS themselves) inform my research, while secondary sources (current scholarly interpretations of both churches) provide insight or ways in to the current scholarly conversation in sociology, religion, and political science (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

*Most different systems.* I have selected the CS and LDS churches as representatives for this study as part of a most different systems design (Przeworski & Teune., 1970, p. 34). "The most different systems designs eliminate factors differentiating social systems by formulating statements that are valid regardless of the systems within which observations are made" (1970, p. 39). I have selected the CS and LDS churches as being "most different systems" because, although each was founded in New England during the nineteenth century, their theologies, doctrines, practices, and structures of governance are nearly opposite of one another. These differences are, like the respective theologies of both religions, biopolitical in nature, as Chapter Four demonstrates. For example, the Christian Science Church was founded by a woman,

Mary Baker Eddy, and is matriarchal in nature. It is generally an urban, middle-class religion, and one that emphasizes thoughtful consideration rather than action. For CS, the physical is secondary to spiritual reality. The LDS church, on the other hand, was founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. and is patriarchal in that it is still led only by men. Unlike the CS, the LDS church grew up on the frontiers and so is rural and appeals to the Jacksonian belief in rugged individualism. Of course, these are only a few of many important differences that will later be discussed in further detail. Interestingly, this analysis reveals that the differences between the sects have only increased with the passage of time. For example, LDS membership is flourishing near 13 million, and the CS membership is struggling to maintain its current numbers (estimated to be less than 236,000) (S. Gottschalk, 1987, p. 111), which peaked in the first decades of the twentieth century. Additionally, as both religions have made their own compromises to balance themselves within the mainstream secular city, their doctrines and the ways in which they are practiced have only grown further apart.

The benefit of studying most different systems is that it allows one to first make note of inherent differences, and then search out any existing (perhaps “hidden”) similarities between the systems. According to Przeworski and Teune (1970), a most different systems design, “which seeks maximum heterogeneity in the sample of systems, is based on a belief that in spite of intersystemic differentiation, the populations will differ with regard only to a limited number of variables or relationships” (p. 39). A most different systems approach to this study has enabled me to uncover a whole network of similarities between the CS and LDS faiths, even though they appear to be nearly opposite systems. This method provides a critical approach that works well with the

genealogical method because both prompt the researcher to question what appears to be true, and to examine truth not as one inviolable whole story, but as layers of a more complex reality. As this analysis will demonstrate, Christian Science and the LDS church have much more in common with regards to specific beliefs and ideologies than is readily apparent, especially relating to the ways that both discipline and politicize the body. It is interesting, then, to discover these similarities and understand how they evolved into such startlingly contrasting systems.

*Hermeneutics.* While reading the materials gathered, I implemented a hermeneutic approach to analysis (Foucault, 2005; Jasper, 2004; J. K. Smith, 1993). Although most commonly understood as strictly analysis of the written word, hermeneutics is a critical approach to analyzing various texts such as publications, interviews, observations, and others. According to Smith, “[i]n the case of the inquirer influenced by critical hermeneutics, the task is not only to depict how people interpret their situations, but also to elaborate the social and historical determinants that may have limited or distorted their interpretations” (1993, p. 193). This method encourages the researcher to situate the subject of study in its own historical milieu. By examining both the CS and LDS faiths in their historical foundational moments and their contemporary manifestations, I am better able to link “the social process and structures that create and maintain them,” (Comstock, 1982, p. 383) and come to an understanding “in light of objective historical conditions” (J. K. Smith, 1993, p. 194). Therefore, a critical hermeneutic approach also enhances objectivity and allows one to investigate *why* these churches are the way they seem to be, and better understand how their specifically

biopolitical approaches to theology emerged and flourished within their particular Jacksonian American contexts.

In this study, a hermeneutic approach to text is complementary to a Foucaultian analysis because both aim to displace misinterpretations and misunderstandings based on a lack of objective critique. Lack of objectivity is especially acute in the study of non-mainstream religious groups, which tend to inspire polarized treatments in text and surprisingly little scholarly attention which is neither overtly critical nor apologetic. A critical hermeneutic study can combat bias in existent texts by revealing the presence of false-consciousness and demonstrating “how the interpretations [people] give to their own situation and that of others are the result of ideological distortion—what they think is the case is not really the case” (p. 194). The purpose of a hermeneutical reading of text is to empower a researcher to overcome barriers to objectivity which may be present in written texts or one’s own observations.

However, in any sociological study, complete objectivity is perhaps neither possible nor desirable. C. Wright Mills (1959), for one, argues for the re-introduction of the personal (including an acknowledgement of subjectivity) into studies of the political. Speaking of the impossibility of true objectivity in a subject in which one is interested, he says, “by their work all students of man and society assume and imply moral and political decisions” (p. 76). Therefore, I acknowledge that, despite my best efforts, this work must necessarily reflect the moral and political decisions I have made as a researcher. To counter-act the effect of my own standpoint, I have followed methodological guidelines established by and exemplified in the works of scholars of religion, sociology, and political science. These include specific methods for the challenges that meet

anthropologists or sociologists of their own native culture from works specifically geared to the study of Mormonism by members of the Church (Knowlton, 1992, 1997), standards for collecting, analyzing, and reporting qualitative social science information (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), and more specific guidelines for framing and understanding the (sometimes messy) process of social scientific inquiry (Gerth & Mills, 1958; Weber, 1949).

Studying one's own religious tradition can be especially challenging because the researcher may find herself torn between standards of critical academic inquiry and allegiance to personal belief. Knowlton (1997), a Mormon scholar of Mormonism, suggests that there is a conflict between "the academic norm of open analysis" and "the scholar's ethical obligation not to damage the religious traditions he or she studies" (p 46). When one is studying one's own religion, as he does, Knowlton say that we ought to acknowledge that "we are selectively blind to our own realities" (p 47). On the other hand, Weber's work on the sociology of religion provides an example for how critical studies of religion might be effectively and respectfully undertaken. In his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (2001), he carefully analyses religious doctrine and practice in relation to the general kinds of culture they support. My aim in the following chapters is similar: to situate the religious theology and practice of both religions (with emphasis on their biopolitical considerations) in their own social-historical American context. In doing so, I hope to lay the groundwork for an insightful study into the ways in which religious belief can make the body the site of a particular form of politics.

## Chapter Two

### **Christian Science and its American Setting**

The body politics of Christian Science are based on a transcendental view of nature and the ultimately spiritual nature of man. In its doctrine and practice, the idea of disciplining the body to save the soul is brought to an extreme case—one which many times ends in the triumph of the spirit and the literal death of the body. In order to understand how Christian Science appropriates popular ideologies of nineteenth-century American life into its own theology, and how its doctrines mark the bodies and shape the lives of its members, background history of its original context is necessary. This history and the policies and politics it underscores remain relevant to the Christian Science church today inasmuch as it still holds to the same core principles—namely, that God is good, and that evil (and consequently sickness and pain) does not exist. The repercussions of these doctrines remain relevant to the biopolitical theology of CS today.

#### *A History of Christian Science*

Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Church of Christ, Scientist, was born in 1821 in Bow, New Hampshire, and was the youngest of six children. The details of her life have been recorded in numerous biographies and paint various pictures of Eddy as either a sickly (and possibly nuerotic) invalid (Cather & Milmine, 1993; Twain, 1993) or a veritable saint (Dakin, 1929; Fettweis, 1998).<sup>5</sup> According to one biographer, Eddy is “the most interesting and controversial woman in America” (Gillian Gill, 1998), and the number of histories devoted to her would suggest that she has certainly attracted her fair

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<sup>5</sup> Much debate surrounds these and other issues relating to Eddy’s life and her discovery of Christian Science, and the various strands of thought cannot be given adequate treatment here. Instead, this section is limited to a recounting of the historical factors which contributed to the founding of The Church of Christ, Scientist in 1879.

share of both interest and controversy. By her own admission, Eddy encountered “[m]any peculiar circumstances and events” during her childhood (Eddy, 2007, p. 9).<sup>6</sup> Notably among these was what some have interpreted as her spiritual “call”. Eddy reports that when she was eight years old, she used to hear a voice calling her name from time to time. When she went to her mother and asked what she wanted, her mother would reply that she hadn’t called Mary at all. This troubling occurrence plagued Eddy intermittently for about a year. Eventually, her mother suggested that if she heard the voice again, she would answer as Samuel had: “Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth” (1 Samuel 3: 9-10). This she did, and never heard the voice again (Eddy, 2007).

In 1843, Eddy married George Washington Glover, and soon after followed him to his native home in South Carolina. Six months later, he fell ill and died, leaving Eddy alone just two months before she was to give birth to their son.<sup>7</sup> Left in desperate financial, physical, and mental stress, Eddy relied on the kindness and generosity of family and others to care for her over the next several years. Eventually she remarried Daniel Patterson, a dentist. But their union was not a happy one by any account, and ended in divorce in 1873, though the two were separated several years earlier. By 1862, a series of failures in Eddy’s personal relationships, coupled with her ill-health and lack

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<sup>6</sup> Eddy uses the term “peculiar” to describe the unique qualifications of her childhood in much the same way that the LDS pride themselves as being peculiar. Both usages have root in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, for example: Deuteronomy 14:2, which says: “For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.” Similarly, 1 Peter 2:9 reads: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:”. In these instances, peculiarity is a marking of having been chosen.

<sup>7</sup> Eddy’s relationship with her son, named George Washington Glover after his father, was complicated by her ill health and precarious mental and financial situation following the death of her first husband. Because Eddy was unable to care for the child herself, she put him in the care of friends who eventually moved to western territory with him. Biographers disagree as to whether or not Eddy had prior knowledge of or agreed with this illegal adoption. In her autobiography, Eddy notes her sadness at the loss of her son, who was taken away and told that his mother had died, according to her (Eddy, 2007, p. 21). Mother and son were not reconnected until young George was 34 years old. Reconciliation between the two eventually failed (Dickey, 1986; Stephen Gottschalk, 2006).

of funds, led her into deep depression. Her bodily sufferings were often more than her spirit could bear.

It was at this low point in her personal, spiritual, and physical well-being that Eddy sought help from Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, a mesmerist who practiced in Portland, Maine. From Quimby Eddy learned basic principles of mind-over matter and the ability for spirit to control the physical.<sup>8</sup> These ideas would later form the basis of her biopolitical theology, which sanctified the mind/Mind and pronounced the body an “illusion”. Undoubtedly, early interactions with Quimby were significant for Eddy, who later wrote a glowing eulogy for the man who had “healed with the truth that Christ taught, in contradistinction to all isms” (Albanese, 2007, p. 289). Still, Eddy was often plagued by illness. All of this suffering came to a head when, in the winter of 1866 she experienced what may be considered a contemporary *felix culpa* or “fortunate fall” (Bloom, 2006). One particularly icy day, she slipped and fell on the ice near her residence in Lynn, Massachusetts. An observer recalls being told on that day that Eddy “had broken her spine and would never be able to take another step alone” (Newhall, 1920). The attending physician reports that he found her “very nervous, partially unconscious, semi-hysterical, complaining by word and action of severe pain in the back of her head and neck” during the hours that followed her fall (Dr. Alvin M. Cushing, qtd. in Bates & Dittmore, 1932, p. 111). Writing later of her own experience, Eddy says, “In

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<sup>8</sup> Quimby referred to his teachings as divine science, the science of health, and even Christian science (Hazen, 2000). Notably, for Quimby, science is “wisdom reduced to self-evident proportions” (Seale, 1988, p. 343). For him, the result of spiritual science was Zion not as the Kingdom of Heaven but as the Kingdom of Science—to be realized when reason alone ruled mankind (Hazen, 2000, p. 127).

While Eddy admits to having been treated by Quimby, and some of her early writings suggest her veneration of him, she later denounced his method and claimed that her science was of no relation to his (Ballard, 1909; Eddy, 1936).

the year 1866, I discovered the Christ Science or divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love, and named my discovery Christian Science” (*S&H* 107:1). Specifically, she says,

The discovery came to pass in this way. During twenty years prior to my discovery I had been trying to trace all physical effects to a mental cause; and in the latter part of 1866 I gained the scientific certainty that all causation was Mind [God], and every effect a mental phenomenon. My immediate recovery from the effects of an injury caused by an accident, an injury that neither medicine nor surgery could reach, was the falling apple that led me to the discovery how to be well myself, and how to make others so. (Eddy, 2007, p. 24)

This miraculous healing came about after Eddy’s physician and other friends had given her up for dead (Gillian Gill, 1998). Abandoned by the hope of modern medicine, Eddy turned to religion to save herself. While reading in her Bible of Christ’s ability to heal the sick, she was overcome and soon found that she herself had been completely and remarkably healed. Her science of healing became centered on the biopolitical potential of belief.

Over the next several years, Eddy worked on her Christian Science, eventually building a church and instructing others how to heal through Christ.<sup>9</sup> The name she chose for her religious organization is itself very telling: at a time when Enlightenment and religion were both struggling for supremacy among the people, Eddy decided to appeal to both. Furthermore, CS appealed to those who, like Eddy, had been plagued by physical pain and had lost faith in medical science. According to Hicks (2004, p. 25), it

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<sup>9</sup> The Church of Christ, Scientist was founded in 1879, though a group was meeting for years prior to that date.

was sheer genius on the part of Eddy that she answered the prayers of the neglected and “wedded Christianity to the nineteenth century preoccupation with health, contested the increasing bifurcation of religion and science, and participated in enlarging the place of women in what was ideologically constructed as the ‘male-dominated’ public sector.” It is little wonder, then, that in the early years many were attracted to Eddy’s new religion. In fact, some were troubled by what was seen as its explosive growth. Mark Twain was among these early critics. He wrote a satirical book on Eddy, denouncing her and her religion at the same time as he acknowledged that they could very well rule the country some day, and perhaps become the next world faith (Twain, 1993).

From this beginning, Christian Science embarked on its world-wide mission to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. This tri-partite mission underscores the importance of the care of the body in the CS religion—even though the body itself is secondary to the spirit, it plays a surprisingly important role in CS practice and politics. Without bodies to act on, the mission of CS would be nearly obsolete. Eddy’s early illnesses, coupled with her lack of success with contemporary medicine led her to seek God for relief of her bodily pains. The religion she founded as a result of her conversion to the science of healing continues to act as biopolitical force in the lives of its parishioners today, many of whom, like Eddy, eschew conventional medicine in favor of strictly spiritual healing of what would otherwise appear to be physical ailments.



*Figure 1. The Cross and Crown of the Mother Church (used by permission). The official seal of CS states its mission: To heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. It also displays the Cross and Crown, which are also seen in other Christian sects, to represent the heavenly reward (crown) for earthly trials (cross). Notably, Jesus himself is absent from the cross.*

*Lasting influence.* The first dedicated building for the Church of Christ, Scientist, was located just off of Massachusetts Avenue in Boston, and built in 1894 with financial contributions from church members. Just twelve years later, the congregation had outgrown its building, and an annex was added in 1906 that more than doubled the size of the original structure. Together, both buildings have a seating capacity of nearly 4,000. The resulting architecture is what some have called “a prayer in stone” (Ivey, 1999; Kilde, 2001), and attracts thousands of visitors each year (Riess, 2002).



*Figure 2. The Mother Church in Boston. (Author's own image.) To the right of the image is the original 1894 building, and to the left is the 1906 annex which now dwarfs it.*

Christian Science has also left its mark on the political landscape in its battles with the state, most of which have centered on the biopolitical significance of the church's adamant stance against medical care. Beginning in 1877, Eddy was frequently at court defending her Science. Between 1877 and 1879, she was directly involved in at least five lawsuits, not including those brought against CS practitioners whose care had resulted in the death of a patient (Cather & Milmine, 1993). In March of 1877, suit was brought against Eddy by a former student, George W. Barry, for unpaid services

including copying manuscripts of *Science and Health*, and work done on Eddy's property. He was eventually awarded \$395.40 in the dispute. In February of 1878, Eddy herself brought suit against Richard Kennedy, another former student whom she claimed had been delinquent of tuition payment for a course on Christian healing (he was ultimately ordered to pay her the \$768.63 he owed). In April 1878, Eddy again filed suit against former students George Tuttle and Charles Stanley who had not paid her royalties from their practice, as had been agreed. The suit was decided for the defendants, who claimed to have made no money practicing Christian Science. Also in April 1878, Eddy brought suit against Daniel Spofford, another former student who had failed to pay royalties from his practice. The case was eventually dismissed. In May 1878, Eddy instigated a case, *Brown v. Spofford*, in which a former student of hers was accused of witchcraft. In this case, she represented the plaintiff; however, the case was demurred and the judge decreed that he could not possibly legislate Spofford's mind.<sup>10</sup> Finally, in 1879 Eddy's third husband Asa and friend Edward J. Arens were arrested and charged with conspiracy to murder Spofford. Although some sketchy evidence was produced, the defendants were judged not guilty.

This series of lawsuits and the spurious and often quarrelsome relations with former students which they evidence gave Eddy a desire to safeguard her legal interests and personal image. The first problem she addressed by publishing a Church Manual, which gave her ultimate authority and oversight of every action.<sup>11</sup> No single member of her congregations had the power to override her authority on any matter, no matter how

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<sup>10</sup> Eddy's witchcraft trial took place in Salem, Massachusetts, where it was not helped by a remaining guilt for the trials which had taken place there over two centuries previously (Cather & Milmine, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Eddy's guidelines were so strict that they left the CS church almost unable to function after her death, as every action required her signature. Through a series of controversies which split the church, the CS Board of Directors was eventually given power to rule over the affairs of the church.

minute. Regarding her personal image, Eddy was inspired to launch the *Christian Science Monitor* after much negative experience with the presses in and around Boston. By establishing the *Monitor* and other presses, she was able to create and control the lens through which the world could view her and her work. These papers effectively worked to shape and “monitor” the partisanship of the church by offering disciplined perspectives of ideal mental and bodily behavior. According to one biographer, Eddy was aware that she often stood on “precarious legal ground” and so “endeavored to safeguard both her organization and her practitioners from the assaults of institutionalized medicine”, which threatened the spirituality of her movement (Hicks, 2004, p. 42). Church publications were one such safeguard against a threat that Eddy and her contemporaries felt could not under any circumstances be ignored because they created a barrier of positive mental energy around her.

*Doctrinal foundations of CS.* What was this faith of which Eddy was so protective? Eddy believed that she was healed when she read from the Bible—that moment was the beginning of her religious movement and still stands as its foundation today (Eddy, 1994). Her doctrine—and its claims of power and authority—rely on a distinct ideal of individualism which is at once both self-aggrandizing and self-deprecating. This gives them a unique perspective of the body and its spiritual significance, and therefore influences their treatment of it. Eddy’s followers believe in the supremacy of God’s spirit, and they deny the significance of anything else (Eddy, 1936, 1994; Stephen Gottschalk, 2006). Christian Scientists often explain the importance of their perspective by noting that religious people sometimes struggle with wondering why a God who is ultimately good will allow people to suffer. Eddy’s answer is simple:

suffering does not exist in a real sense. If a person believes that he is suffering, that is a manifestation of his personal deviation from the Spirit of God. Because man is made in the image and likeness of God, and God is perfect Spirit, man must also be likewise. Therefore, each individual is God's perfect child. This particular doctrine of the body—the suggestion that it does not exist in a real way—has obvious biopolitical effects. Followers of Eddy view their bodies as either manifestations of the divine (when they are healthy) or distractions from it (when they are ill or otherwise imperfect). This metaphysical-biopolitical doctrine is enacted in demonstrations of CS healing. For example, if an individual believes that she is sick, one explanation is that she simply does not have enough faith in the all-goodness of God, or the ability to see herself as God sees her—a perfect creation (Fraser, 1999).<sup>12</sup>

The logic of Eddy's doctrine regarding the goodness of God and the non-existence of evil appears to be circular. Eddy emphasizes these key points again and again: God is all, and God is good. Therefore, all is good and evil does not exist. Of course, if one does not accept this creed, one becomes subject to one's own false perceptions of the world, which may include evil, despair, sickness, and hurt. Therefore, it becomes a mental challenge to keep one's self well, and one must acknowledge and fully accept that God is all in order to benefit from the blessing of assurance that comes with that particular doctrine. Specifically, Eddy says: "All that is made is the work of God, and all is good" (*S&H* 541: 4). This particular point of theology is based in Eddy's re-interpretation of the creation story in the book of Genesis. For her, the story of man's

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<sup>12</sup> Until the latter decades of the twentieth century, Christian Scientists commonly referred to complaints of illness as "claims" or "beliefs" in order to underscore the un-reality of anything short of perfection. Members of the Church today have varying opinions as to the proper use of the terms; however, they have dropped out of popular usage in public testimonies and CS publications.

physical creation from the dust of the earth is metaphorical, and man and woman are truly spiritual beings by nature. Such an interpretation also requires one to believe that evil does not exist in the world. One Christian Scientist explains the CS worldview by saying that “When the individual realizes that the world of spirit is wholly good and that he is an expression of a totally good God, this realization *brings the spiritual world into his human experience*” (Chapel, 1975, p. 142, emphasis added). Therefore, the Christian Scientist comes to Zion through the “abnegation of human will rather than the exercise of it” (S. Gottschalk, 1987, p. 112). The CS Zion is a state of mind.

Central to this ideology is the Pauline call to “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2). Christian Scientists interpret this recommendation to mean that an individual’s mind must be one with the Mind of God. This “oneness” is the product of careful concentration and strict mental discipline. Because spirituality relies so much on perception, church members must be vigilant of what they read, watch, or otherwise allow to influence them. Of course, this is not always easily done. Such a wholly spiritual outlook demands a high level of self-discipline that constantly reasserts the supremacy of the mind and the nothingness of the physical. Christian Science publications are meant to arbitrate the CS view of temporal reality and help members to justify the seemingly material “realities” of the world with what they understand to be a deeper reality. The role of *The Christian Science Monitor* is not to ignore the problems of the world, but to present them in a way that supports the faith of those who believe in the inherent goodness of man as God’s creation.

The non-existence of evil and the insignificance of all material matter (because nothing exists that is not God) has proven to be a difficult concept for some to understand. Those who are suffering physically, financially, or otherwise often do not want to hear that their troubles are not real. Furthermore, when healings fail (as they sometimes do), it is easy for many to lose faith in Eddy's phenomenal message. However, for Eddy and those who believe her, this system of thought is physically, mentally, and spiritually liberating. Thanks to this discovered theology, Eddy, who had been nearly bedridden for most of her adult life, now had the power to become the leader of an enormous church organization. She was healed by her faith in the spirit of God which was in her, by using the power of her mind to subjugate her body. This first modern act of Christian Science, although spiritual in its significance to church members, is fully biopolitical in its impact on their lived realities. CS reading materials are full of testimonial accounts of similar, life-changing, miraculous healings which continue to be manifest today, as religious practice continues to inscribe itself on the bodies of the faithful (Eddy, 1994).

This spirit of freedom and inner peace was especially relevant to US citizens in Eddy's day because the inexperience of medical doctors combined with the filth of industrialization and greed of capitalism left many wondering about the costs of "progress" and materialism secularly defined. Modern medical practices at the time included bloodletting and castor-oil cure-alls, and were often less than effective (as Eddy's experience demonstrates)(Howe, 2007). In the late nineteenth century, medicines were often sold out of carpet bags, and their purveyors had no special education or training, nor any federal authorities to which they were accountable. At this time,

homeopathic practices, which were based on the logic that a sick person would be cured by a medicine which would make a well person sick, were developed. In reaction to the poor regulation and slow advance of medicine at the time, other alternatives, such as osteopathy (which focuses on the body as a system) were founded. Despite these and other “improvements”, the chronically ill in the nineteenth century often led dismal lives, as Eddy had, without hope of recovery or any relief from symptoms. Thanks in part to this kind of desperation, coupled with a burgeoning spirit of enlightenment evidence in broader society, the medical field was wide open and the climate was ripe for those with an entrepreneurial spirit. Therefore, it was an ideal time for a woman like Eddy to introduce her science, and partly because other methods of treatment were often unreliable, she quickly gained a faithful following, despite her unorthodox theology.

#### *Power and Authority in the CS*

In the past as well as in the present, the concept of the all-existence of God and the nothingness of everything else makes for some complicated implications for governance in CS—apart from its overtly biopolitical message (which will be further discussed in Chapter Four). First, because God is always present and ever-powerful, the idea of authority in CS—who has it and why—is not ultimately clear. Although Eddy respected the spiritual nature of each individual, she kept ultimate power in the church organization solely to herself. In the CS tradition, authority originates from God (and Eddy was able to claim this authority because of her communion with him). But it also comes from all of humanity, because, according to Eddy, all individuals are part of God’s spirit. If the spirit of God is within an individual, then she is all-powerful and all-good, as He is. A person only needs to awaken to this truth in order to benefit from it.

Still, Eddy was very protective of who she allowed to have actual administrative authority in her church. Ultimately, she established a complex system to ensure that no individual would have any claim to authority in her church after her death, assuring her an enduring kingdom on earth. Today, Eddy herself is pastor emeritus of her church, and the acting pastor is her book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Guidelines for how meetings are to be run and business conducted are strictly enforced by the Christian Science Board of Directors. An individual in Eddy's church, while imbued with the power of God within, is never allowed what could be considered a position of power. Instead, persons are selected on a rotating basis to govern the necessary affairs of the church. The temporary authority delegated to them rests on the principle of godliness within coupled with education (in a CS school, preferably). Ideally, the CS mind must be schooled and disciplined, so that it may better be able to discipline the body.

#### *Christ in Christian Science*

Perhaps the best way to describe the CS vision of Christ is to ask who he was in their tradition and examine how CS theology envisions his mission or central purpose. Harold Bloom (2006) provides a nice starting ground for such an analysis in his description of what he calls "the American religion" (according to him, both CS and LDS are important components of this general American faith). As he (a Gnostic Jew) understood it, "the American Christ is more American than he is Christ" (2006, p. 8). Much of this has to do with a new theologizing of Christ's divinely appointed purpose by American religions. Bloom explains with this image:

Compare the Roman Catholic crucifix with the cross of all Baptist Churches, as well as of most other American Protestant denominations.

The Catholics worship Christ crucified, but the Baptists salute the empty cross, from which Jesus has already risen. *Resurrection is the entire concern of the American religion*, which gets Christ off the cross as quickly as Milton removed him, in just a line and a half of *Paradise Lost*. (2006, p. 25, emphasis added)

If “[r]esurrection is the entire concern of the American religion,” as Bloom says, what are the particular interpretations of Christian Science or LDS ontologies of Christ? And how do their specific interpretations of the significance of his bodily resurrection reinforce their individual forms of biopolitical spirituality?

Christ’s power of resurrection is certainly paramount in Christian Science, which teaches that sin, sickness, and all other “worldly” ills can be overcome through Christ. His resurrection, then, was the ultimate manifestation that God’s goodness could negate the powers of death. While most Christians believe that all men are subject to mortality thanks to Adam’s fall in the Garden of Eden, Christian Science teaches that the goodness of God never intended for mankind to taste of death at all. Christ, through his clear understanding of this truth, provides the ultimate demonstration when he heals the sick, raises the dead, and is resurrected himself. Through these acts, he shows that the spirit is stronger than the body and what appear to be the physical laws of matter, and that spirituality is actually the key to health.

Of course, the Christian Science Christ differs from that of formal Christianity because CS theology separates the Christ spirit from the man Jesus. According to CS theology, Jesus was a mortal man who demonstrated the Christ

spirit—and, similarly, all who are faithful and seek understanding of God can demonstrate the Christ spirit also. This they may do through their righteous thoughts and actions, as well as through participating in (or benefiting from) actual healings. These are biopolitical indicators of a spiritual truth.

This particular theology also has implications for the politics of authority previously mentioned. As a woman, Eddy therefore had just as much power and authority as Jesus the man had—this was seen as a radical and challenging claim. Like him, she also accepted and demonstrated “the Christ spirit” that alone gives claim to divinity. CS makes a distinction between Jesus the man and the Christ, or the spirit of the Christ science that he demonstrated to the world. Therefore, while Jesus was a good, special man, he was not God; and, to Christian Scientists, Christian healing is “the babe we are to cherish” (Eddy, 1915, p. 370), rather than the infant Jesus in the manger. According to Eddy biographer Stephen Gottschalk:

On the crucial theological point of the deity of Jesus, there is a clear and unambiguous difference between Christian Science and traditional Christian doctrine. For example, the fact that Christian Scientists do not believe in the deity of Jesus precludes their church from membership in the World Council of Churches. But their position is seriously regarded as the figure through whom, supremely and uniquely, God’s nature was manifested to humanity. In Eddy’s theology, Jesus’ virgin birth, crucifixion and bodily resurrection were the pivotal events in human history, absolutely indispensable to human salvation. (1986, p. 1146)

Therefore, Christian Science is “Christian” in an altogether different sense than that recognized by much of mainstream Christianity. Still, it is important to keep in mind that Christian Scientists follow the teachings of Christ and mark his bodily resurrection as the ultimate demonstration of their faith. This theology lays the groundwork for a faith of the mind, which practices a mental biopolitics on the self as it constantly seeks to subjugate the material to the spiritual.

The CS opinion of Christ and the man Jesus proved to be a schismatic creed, although it was not unheard of in the US at the time. In fact, in transcendentalist circles, this theology was just becoming popular. When considered in light of other transcendental ideals, including the nature of man and his own inherent right to autonomy of spirit, this theology has deeply political implications which continue to be played out in litigation brought against CS members today. Foremost among these is the notable separation of the *body* of Jesus with the *spirit* of Christ—the former being of secondary importance and of no theological significance. Additionally, the idea that Jesus was not the literal son of God was, and remains, a major dividing issue among American Christians today.

#### *Christian Science and Enlightenment Ideals*

Besides this transcendental view of Christ, how did this scientific religion fit into the social and cultural moment of its arising? The practice of Christian Science depends on the ability of its adherents to use reason to find truth. In fact, according to Eddy, the ability to reason is one of the “inalienable rights” given to man from God (*S&H* 106:6). Reason and scientific rationality hold a different context for the Christian Scientist, although the religion is reliant on the kind of enlightenment ideals which were popular in

and around Boston during the middle part of the nineteenth century. While Eddy insisted that “right reasoning” will lead only to the thought of spiritual existence and nothing else (*S&H* 491:28), others were exploring different—although similarly transcendental—meanings.<sup>13</sup> While many of these ideologies reflect a dedication to spiritual rather than physical nature, their resulting doctrines are also biopolitical for the ways they suggest that the body ought to be literally, physically, and permanently subjugated to the spirit.

*What is Enlightenment?* This was the question put to Kant in the late eighteenth century, to which he answered, in part, “Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity”, which is “the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another” (Kant, 2008, para. 1). The call of enlightenment, for Kant, is to “[d]are to know!” by asking questions and seeking intelligence (2008, para. 1). At a time and place where reasoning required a certain show of courage, Kant suggested that the practice of enlightenment in the public sphere—the use of one’s own powers of reason—was worth the personal cost, as it would eventually lead to better government which would treat the

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<sup>13</sup> It may appear that comparison between CS and the Enlightenment is anachronistic, seeing as Kant—whose life is generally designated as the end point of that period—first wrote of the term in 1784, nearly 100 years before Eddy founded her church. However, German philosophy enjoyed great (if late) interest in mid-nineteenth century Boston, where translations of works such as Kant’s in mass quantities were slow to venture. This is evidenced in the mid-nineteenth century writings of Emerson, Thoreau, and Brownson. For example, Thoreau made no secret of his veneration of his contemporaries in Germany. As a student, he studied the German language, taking lessons from fellow transcendentalist Orestes Brownson—who later helped found the Transcendental Club in 1836 (Vogel, 1970, p. 68). It was important for Thoreau to be able to read German thinkers in their own tongue, without the interruption of a third person translator. Printed translations had no guaranteed accuracy, and for Thoreau, the ideas of men such as Goethe and Kant were important enough to experience for himself. As Stanley M. Vogel writes in *German Literary Influences on the American Transcendentalists*, “Goethe always remained the most important of the Germans” to Thoreau (88). This is evident in Thoreau’s frequent inclusion of Goethe in his own writings, most notably *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (Garber, 1996, p. 42). In addition to their shared interest in all things natural, Goethe and Thoreau also had a shared interest in the inadequacies of human law. Goethe, in turn, readily admitted that some of his ideas were in harmony with the ideas of his contemporary, Immanuel Kant (Tantillo 101), and Thoreau himself seems to echo the maxims of the categorical imperative in his ideas on civil disobedience. Furthermore, some have alleged that Eddy “purloined” her Christian Science theology from the likes of Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Kant himself (Haushalter, 1936). Although these charges have been refuted (Moehlman, 1955), the connections between CS and Enlightenment ideals warrant further examination in this text.

people with the dignity that they had found for themselves. For Kant, enlightenment promises the freedom to reason for one's self, and he is enthusiastic about the prospects of its practice in both politics and religion. His perspective is generally viewed as among the first in a still on-going debate regarding the morality of critical introspection, positivism, and the death of God in the face of man's scientific knowledge.

Centuries after Kant, Foucault wrote an essay with the same title but a different perspective on the spirit of enlightenment which had intervened. The question "what is enlightenment?", Foucault insists, is one that "modern philosophy has not been capable of answering but has never managed to get rid of either" (1997b, p. 303). A precursor to modernity, enlightenment is a concept much too complex to be justly dealt with in a few pages. Still, various perceptions of enlightenment through the ages have served as a lens for man to view and understand himself (leading to what Foucault calls a "critical ontology of ourselves") (1997b, p. 319), and as such, has real implications for mysticism and religion in nineteenth-century America. Interestingly, Foucault defines enlightenment as "a modification of the preexisting relation linking will, authority, and the use of reason" (1997b, p. 305), suggesting that the stakes of any argument on the matter are at once both personal and political. As Foucault suggests, enlightenment is truly not a state of being but an *act of seeing*. It is this introspective action which fueled the Zionist yearnings of Eddy and her followers—bidding them to "see" with their spiritual reasoning what was not apparent to the secular senses. This religious enlightenment offers an alternative vision of sorts, one which members of the CS believe allows a better perspective of Zion.

Other modern thinkers have posed their own theories of enlightenment. While they do nothing to simplify the concept, they also provide some insight into the ways in which Christian Science as a social/political/religious movement was a child of its times. This is apparent not only in the ways that CS adopts a certain perspective of enlightenment and reason, but also in how it rejects other standards of the same. For example, for Adorno and Horkheimer (2002), enlightenment can easily overstep the bounds of moral rationality and become cold, calculating, and completely human, having lost all contact with the divine. Nietzsche similarly argued that enlightenment could be “all too human” in its effects (1984). The enlightened man, he says,

will no longer want to condemn and root out his desires; but his single goal, governing him completely, to understand as well as he can at all times, will cool him down and soften all the wildness in his disposition. In addition, he has rid himself of a number of tormenting ideas; he no longer feels anything at the words “pains of hell,” “sinfulness,” “incapacity for the good”: for him they are only the evanescent silhouettes of erroneous thoughts about life and the world. (Nietzsche, 1984, p. 53)

Eddy’s view of enlightened reason is one which is not separate from divinity, but like those Nietzsche envisions, the CS perspective paints pain, sin, and evil as “erroneous thoughts”, secondary to a higher, personal Truth. In her perspective, though, it is not that God is dead, but that God is always alive and so the torments which Nietzsche speaks of cannot possibly exist. There is no superman in CS—only an all-encompassing Deity.

Often, the Enlightenment period is characterized by a shift away from God and toward man’s own power of scientific reasoning. However, in Eddy’s theology the two

are one and the same. “The dream that matter and error are something must yield to reason and revelation”, she says. When this happens, “mortals will behold the nothingness of sickness and sin, and sin and sickness will disappear from consciousness” (*S&H* 347:26). Furthermore, she says, speaking of the power of the mind, “[a]dmit the existence of matter, and you admit that mortality (and therefore disease) has a foundation in fact. Deny the existence of matter, and you can destroy the belief in material conditions” (*S&H* 368: 27-31). Happiness and physical well-being are therefore mental work for the Christian Scientist.

The science demonstrated by Christ was one that did not rely on the senses; it is therefore not empirical by modern scientific standards. But Eddy and her followers believe that their spiritual reason is the only rational way to think and view the world. According to Eddy, “Science speaks when the senses are silent [through the mind]...Christian Science and the senses are at war...He who turns to the body for evidence, bases his conclusions on mortality, on imperfection...” (1915, pp. 100-101). Additionally, Eddy taught that “[i]f we trust matter, we distrust Spirit” (*S&H* 234: 3). Critics of enlightenment sometimes argue that a preoccupation with the factual leaves little room for the theoretical (Outram, 1995), but in the case of Eddy and her Christian form of Science, metaphysical contemplation takes precedence over the physical sensations that form the basis for more secular types of science.

*The Science of CS.* Christian Science is unique among religions because, as one commenter put it, CS is primarily a *science*, a classical episteme or viewpoint, and a religion only secondarily (Merritt & Corey, 1970). According to Foucault (1994), an episteme is a model for the way that relationships of truth and inquiry are ordered. For

example, a certain episteme determines what kind of questions can be asked (and answered) by whom and why. As an episteme or discipline of thought, the science of CS colors the believer's perspective of the world and his or her experience of it. Because of this reliance on what appears to be a spiritual empiricism, CS follows an enlightenment model of viewing the world and reasoning truth.

What is more, the science of CS is a totalizing episteme because it does not allow for the admission of any other perspective. According to Eddy, "Science is absolute and final" because it is infallible (divine) Truth (1915, p. 99). In Christian Science, Truth is one of seven synonyms for God, and so is imbued with an especially significant spirituality. As the essence of Godliness, "Truth is immortal; error is mortal. Truth is limitless; error is limited. Truth is intelligent; error is non-intelligent" (*S&H* 466:8). Furthermore, Eddy asserts that "the suppositional warfare between truth and error is only the mental conflict between the evidence of the spiritual senses and the testimony of the material senses" (*S&H* 288:3). Thus, the science of CS is one that is not dependent upon the senses; conversely, it depends upon a strict rebuttal of them.

**Seven Synonyms for God in Christian Science:**

1. Mind
2. Spirit
3. Principle
4. Soul
5. Life
6. Love
7. Truth

*Table 1. Seven synonyms for God in Christian Science. Each is defined by Eddy in the glossary to Science and Health.*

Exactly what kind of science does the Christian Scientist practice? It is one that relies on experiments of faith<sup>14</sup> and demonstrations of healing. These material manifestations of metaphysical truth center on the body as the prime site for demonstration and complicate the biopolitical theology of the faith as it relates to the

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<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, the LDS faith also espouses some scientific aspects, most notably in a section of *Book of Mormon* text which encourages would-be believers to “experiment upon the word.” This experiment is described as a logical test of the practical effects of belief. In this text, the word is likened to a seed, and listeners are encouraged to prove the worth of the seed by planting it, caring for it “by your faith, with great diligence and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof” (Alma 32: 41). If the seed grows and bears good fruit, it must have been a good seed (meaning that the belief was well-founded). This sort of experiment, given in terms that the ancient (and nineteenth-century) farming audience would understand, is meant to be testimony-promoting, and is often referenced casually in LDS church services.

As might be suspected, the LDS focus on the temporal forms a type of scientific foundation for faith based on the senses. Smith, for example, states emphatically: “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of [Jesus Christ], this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father...” (*D&C 76: 22-23*, emphases added). For the Latter-day Saint, testimony in the metaphysical may also be rooted in the sensation of the physical (Bush, 1993). Others have noted this paradox, as well. Terryl Givens writes, “there seems in Mormonism an emphasis in certainty, rather than faith, that is theologically, rhetorically, and culturally pervasive (2007, p. 27). Similarly, Steven Harper argues that this combination of rational argument and experiential and supernatural belief was the basis of Mormonism’s original appeal (2000).

secular government (which has its own concern and standards for the health care of its population). As one of Eddy's biographers put it, CS is different from secular science because, "[f]or the average man, truth must be arrived at by a comparison of the idea with objective reality. Christian Science, denying objective reality, wipes away all standards by which truth may be ascertained" (Edward Dankin, qtd. in Merritt & Corey, 1970, pp. 135-136). Thus, the truth claims of CS are especially totalizing for the individual believer.

Although it is considered the highest manifestation of the spiritual, Christian Science healing is never considered a miracle, because the term denotes some deviation from natural law. As the faithful Church member sees it, Christian healing is the *demonstration* of natural law or eternal truth. Any idea or feeling of sickness is illusory, and a return of the perfect body or image is simply a manifestation of the way that things are always already. To correctly understand and faithfully practice true Science and Principle (another synonym for God) is to clarify one's perspective. When one sees God's creation as it is (all good), then there is no place for evil, illness, or even contention.

Christian Science as a science is a healing method that acts on body and spirit to bring the perception of both into alignment with Divine Truth. In some ways, it takes the place of medicine (what Eddy calls "materia medica", also tied to state power, and with its own episteme) and at the same time denounces the competency of medical science as a field of study. "The materialistic doctor," for Eddy, "...is an artist who outlines his thought relative to disease, and then fills in his delineations with sketches from textbooks" (*S&H* 198: 9). She reasons that there is no less sickness because of doctors

(her own experience supports this), and, on the contrary, that doctors and others who mean well actually do harm by planting “thorns” (or mortal ideas) in the pillows of the sick (*S&H* 364:32). Therefore, the science practiced by members of the CS church is different from, but related to the philosophies of enlightenment previously discussed.

Under contemporary circumstances, the relationship between CS and material science remains somewhat uncertain, even to Christian Scientists themselves (“Question of the Week: What is Scientific Religion?,” 2008). In 2008, a Christian Science youth posed a question on a CS message board. He was a physics major at a university, and was having problems relating the “science” he learned in school to the divine Science of CS. Specifically, he asks: “If Christian Science is truly a science, what types of repeatable, controlled experiments can show that the universe works according to God's laws?” (“Experiments (literal) in Christian Science,” 2008, para. 1). Answers came in from several sources, each of which attempted to describe the complex relation between secular and spiritual science. One poster likened the process of experimenting with CS to seeking an arithmetic proof. Both processes, he says, are based on principle, indicating that

[i]f we're understanding the truth about ourselves as perfect children of God, made in the image and likeness of Him, then a correct application of this would have to result in a health-giving solution. That's the science of Christianity. That's the science of healing. (“Experiments (literal) in Christian Science,” 2008 para. 2)

Therefore, the key to understanding the scientific reality of CS is to understand the principle/Principle upon which it is founded. Christian Science is a religious type of deductive Aristotelianism, then, in the way that it relies on evidence to support belief.

Ultimately, the science of CS works mainly apart from, despite, or perhaps in contradistinction to the body, particularly in cases where medical care is denied. This seeming lack of care for the biological only strengthens the CS potential for biopolitical power. Often, this spiritual Science is manifest in its preoccupations with a burgeoning theological understanding of the psychiatric, which allows practitioners to spiritually-mentally transform its membership with a doubly-sanctioned authority (the psycho-significance of CS will be more fully explained in Chapter Five). Christian Science functions as a mental science, one that both studies and practices on the mind. Eddy and her followers take pains to note the distinction between their Christian Science and other, un-godly forms of mental work, such as mesmerism and hypnotism.<sup>15</sup> Unlike those methods, the science of CS operates based on spiritual principle, and works because reality and matter are ultimately spiritual by nature. Through principles such as these, the theological basis for the scientific practice of CS makes it singularly comforting to followers who espouse both enlightened reason and spiritual Truth.

*Zion as a transcendental reality.* The CS vision of an ideal reality is ultimately a product of its time and place, as is true for the ideas of any social movement. At the same time, it is still lived and practiced faithfully today, and so remains relevant to contemporary biopolitical debates. Notably, however, the time and place of origin of CS

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<sup>15</sup> Mesmerism, also known as animal magnetism, was first postulated by Franz Anton Mesmer in the latter part of the eighteenth century. In 1768, he set up practice as a physician in Vienna, but he soon found that treating a patient's "imagination" was better than most other available medical practices. His method eventually evolved into hypnosis, which is used today as a psychological and even medical procedure.

and its consequent theology each align with the height of American Transcendentalism, which flourished in and around Boston in the middle and second half of the nineteenth century. Like CS, transcendentalism embraces a different kind of reason, one which privileges the individual conscience and the spirituality of man. Transcendentalists, like Emerson, Thoreau, and Bronson Alcott, believed in the ultimate sovereignty of the individual, just as Eddy did (although they did not ultimately believe in the same sort of divinity within which Eddy preached). They believed that each man was his own highest authority, that conscience was supreme above the law (as in Thoreau's act of civil disobedience). They also believed that goodness could be found from within, meaning that if a person wanted to advance him or herself, he or she ought to begin with some serious self-contemplation.

For example, Emerson, like Eddy, believed in the ultimate divinity within each individual.<sup>16</sup> Speaking of his own interpretation of Christianity, he said:

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul.....Alone in all history he estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of His World. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion, "I am divine. Through me, God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think." (qtd. in Peel, 1958, p. 8)

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<sup>16</sup> Emerson also believed that there was a difference between the spiritual insight of Christ and the person of Jesus (Peel, 1958, p. 9). Theodore Parker also preached to late nineteenth century Boston that Jesus was separate from the Christ. This sentiment seems to have been taken from German translations of the Bible, and represent what Robert Peel claims is "an American echo of the Strausian distinction between the historic Jesus and the eternal Christ" (1958, p. 10).

This statement, shocking as it was to some of Boston society, is reminiscent also of the words of Walt Whitman, another contemporary of Eddy's, who in "Song of Myself" wrote of the body electric, freed, empowered, glorified. Both of these ideas have much in common with the CS doctrine of the divinity within—namely, that divinity is inherently part of each individual, if we would only see it, or, as Emerson says, think the right way.

Furthermore, like Eddy, transcendentalists believed that the best solutions to man's problems were natural. The philosophy of transcendentalism is one which shuns empiricism while embracing the ultimate, unsullied and unquestioned goodness of the self (Gura, 2007, p. 11). For example, Alcott saw the natural, physical world as fallen. He described "nature as the product of man's falling away from God" (Peel, 1958, p. 19).<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, he said, "[n]ature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient" (Peel, 1958, p. 19). He continues to encourage the imagination of the individual, saying, "[k]now then that the world exists for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect" (1958, p. 19). As Alcott saw it, the world already was perfect, if people would only open their minds to that possibility. Similarly, sinfulness and error could cause nature—or matter—to turn against man. Like Eddy, Alcott believed that mankind only needed a change of perspective in order to appreciate the perfection around them. Suggesting this spiritual vision, he went on to instruct his followers:

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<sup>17</sup> Alcott and Eddy did have a short-lived friendship. Alcott was looking for a "prophetess" and thought he may have found one in Eddy. Although the two shared similar ideas, Alcott's final judgement was that Christian Science is good because of its idealism, but he thought it was superstitious, and after a time came to believe that Eddy was no longer following the truth (Peel, 1958, p. 87). While Peel argues that Eddy didn't know enough about transcendental thinking to borrow her ideas from it, Woodbridge Riley believes that she stole her ideas from Alcott himself (Riley, 2005).

Build therefore your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea of your mind, that will unfold in great proportions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit. So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine, spiders, snakes, pests, mad-houses, prisons, enemies vanish; they are temporary and shall be no more seen. (Peel, 1958, pp. 19-20)

This statement has many parallels to Eddy's thought, and indicates that she was a woman in tune with the spirit of her time. For example, Christian Science teaches that evil and suffering (including physical sensations of pain) are merely illusions of the mortal mind, and are not part of Spirit. Eddy would agree that "as fast as you conform your life to the pure idea of ...[M]ind", these types of false sensations will be overcome.

Also like Eddy, Alcott taught that nature was secondary to the spirit of man. Like other transcendentalists, he believed that all of nature was a miracle itself, and that Jesus' miracles were accomplished according to natural law (Peel, 1958, p. 30). Speaking of the power of mind over matter, he said, "The kingdom of man over nature, ...he shall enter with no more wonder than the blind man feels who is gradually received to perfect sight" (Peel, 1958, p. 20). Similarly, Orestes Brownson said: "There is no dead matter, there are no fatal causes, nature is thought, and God is its personality" (Peel, 1958, p. 22). Again, this is like Eddy's thought that God is the only force in the universe, and that all is Mind, and that matter is error.

Like CS, transcendentalism offered a new way of seeing and thereafter experiencing the world. It was "a way of seeing the world, centered on individual consciousness rather than on external fact" and involved a "primacy of self-

consciousness” (Gura, 2007, p. 8). Through the influence of transcendental philosophy on broader American religious and political culture and ideology, this “way of seeing the world” also shaped the way that others thought about reality, priority, and the relationship between man and spirit. Eddy’s new religious worldview therefore reflected a more general interest in changing one’s perspective, and thereby changing the meaning of the world. In a way, it represents a particularly situated “daring to know”, typical of a general spirit of enlightenment, but individually suited to the particular ideologies of CS.<sup>18</sup>

In the history of American thought, Transcendentalism follows Enlightenment thinking, largely because transcendentalism itself relied upon late Enlightenment/early Romantic German texts (Gura, 2007). For example, Arthur Schopenhauer, a German philosopher who inspired much of American Transcendentalism, taught that Will (a general force, not to be confused with individual human desires) is the ultimate power behind the universe—that nature and all material things are secondary and subject to Will, and that personal physical desire is directionless and futile. Like Eddy, he believed that the pain of everyday living could be alleviated by a personal negation of desire and the careful practice of contemplation.

The relationship between enlightenment and transcendental thinking is not as distant as might be assumed. In fact, transcendentalism might be understood as a more human, metaphysical interpretation of the enlightenment project of reason, wisdom, and free will. Schopenhauer’s thought bridges the two ideologies. As Tocqueville observed, “The philosophers of the eighteenth century explained the gradual weakening of beliefs

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<sup>18</sup> This flexibility in the concept of “enlightenment” is explained by Foucault in his essay on the subject (1997b).

in an altogether simple fashion. Religious zeal, they said, will be extinguished as freedom and enlightenment increase.” Soon after arriving in America, he realized that this was not the case (2002, p. 282). In fact, religions like Eddy’s Christian Science flourished on the remnants of enlightenment philosophy in the nineteenth century US.

The similarities between Eddy’s theosophy and transcendental philosophy all stem from a metaphysical perception of the universe, with mind/consciousness/self at its center. According to J. A. Saxon, transcendentalism is “the practical philosophy of belief and conduct. Every man is a transcendentalist; and all true faith, the motives of all past action, are transcendental” (qtd. in Gura, 2007, epigraph). In a statement very close to Eddy’s scientific statement of being, Emerson asserts that “mind is the only reality” (Emerson, 1971, p. 203). Mind, another CS synonym for God, is of utmost importance to the Christian Scientist, who define it as

The only I, or Us; the only Spirit, Soul, divine Principle, substance, Life, Truth, Love; the one God; not that which is in man, but the divine Principle, or God, of whom man is the full and perfect expression; Deity, which outlines but is not outlined. (*S&H* 591:18)

The care of the mind is therefore the ultimate in self-care. And when the mind is in its proper place, the faithful Christian Scientist can find herself in Zion at any place and any time. Compounding the CS theological emphasis on mind/Mind, the religion became most popular at a time and place where education and the cultivation of self were the reigning ideals (Meyer, 1965). This is likely why Eddy took pains to establish a system of colleges and accredited institutes of higher education in order to prepare her students

for the practice of mind-healing. Eddy offered her followers a more cultivated ideal of leadership: one of education, refinement (inherited or acquired), and stability.

Through its system of education, its emphasis of individual self-care over governmental interference, and its privileging of metaphysical doctrines over empirical observation, Christian Science reflects and magnifies the social and philosophical milieu into which it was born, including its uniquely biological politics. This is not to say that CS has “stolen” its doctrines from previously existing sources. On the contrary, it is to be expected that a new religious organization—even one which claims to be a reinstatement of primitive Christianity (the church as Christ established it), as CS does (Bloom, 2006)<sup>19</sup>—would be influenced at least in part by the spiritual and political debates that it encountered.

It is also important to keep in mind that although CS may seem to be a radical religion today, it was not so out of place in its historical context. In the decades after the Second Great Awakening and the myriads of movements that stemmed from it, Christian Science was really just one among many new religious experiments in the US (more will be said about this in the next chapter). However, what makes Christian Science stand apart from so many other American religions that were founded during the nineteenth century is simply that it remains a strong biopolitical religious presence today. Despite opposition in the popular media and declining numbers, the Mother Church in Boston and the divine Science of CS continue to shape the minds, bodies, and spirits of its followers in ways that call into question other, more mainstream ways of thinking and experiencing

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<sup>19</sup> The LDS similarly claim to be a restoration of the one true gospel. Harold Bloom, for one, argues that despite CS and LDS insistence “[t]he primitive Christian Church of ancient Israel” is “a great American myth”, and probably never existed (2006, pp. 32, 25).

the world. Not least among these is the CS doctrine of Zion, or the potential for each individual person to mentally live in his or her own heaven on earth.

*The Biopolitical Reality of a Metaphysical Zion*

Given its rich philosophical heritage, Christian Science offers a unique perspective on the potential for Zion in the here-and-now, which, in turn, has implications for the way that the religion treats and appreciates the mortal bodies of its membership. Although the group is perhaps best known for healing medical ailments, the church's teachings are adamant that its method of spiritual healing is effective treatment in the case of *every* ill—physical, social, or even political. According to Eddy, “The equipollence of God brought to life another glorious proposition,—man’s perfectability and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth (S&H 110:9). Spiritual understanding allows the faithful Christian Scientist to realize that heaven is already present on this earth, if only one will open his/her mind to embrace the possibility. The result of such an understanding, based on the belief “that all men have one Mind, one God and Father, one Life, Truth, Love,” is that

Man will become perfect as this fact becomes apparent, war will cease and the true brotherhood of man will be established. Having no other gods, turning to no other but the one perfect Mind to guide him, man is the likeness of God, pure and eternal... (S&H 467:9)

A world without war, without error, is the epitome of what Zion is to the Christian Scientist. In fact, they believe that such a world is already existent. For example, in church services members around the world sing to the “daughter of Zion”, encouraging her to “Awake, for thy foes shall oppress thee no more...Arise, for the night of thy

sorrow is o'er...the foe is destroyed that enslaved thee; Th' oppressor is vanquished, and Zion is free" (The Christian Science Board of Directors, 1937, number 200). In other words, the call is to recognize that the City of God is already accessible to those with the spiritual vision to behold it, and therefore, in a sense, partake of it now. The enjoyment of Zion comes from the realization that God has already conquered all that ails mankind, and that one's spirit is actually (always already) free.

Through this particular millenarian vision relies on a strict and swift rebuttal to all imperfection, including all material things, all physical ills, problems, sin, or evils of any sort, Christian Science espouses a unique perspective of the possibility for "heaven on earth". In their theology, Zion means "spiritual foundation and superstructure; inspiration, and spiritual strength" (Science and Health 599:6). Perspectives on Zion or glimpses of heaven are given a little at a time through instances known as healings or demonstrations. The following testimony of healing offers an example of how this sort of other-worldly in-this-world perspective is gained. It also demonstrates the heavily biopolitical power of a CS spirituality. A Christian Scientist father from Rwanda recounts his story of conversion, one of dozens published monthly in church periodicals. He says,

Before being acquainted with Christian Science, I was always annoyed with problems: financial problems, relationship problems. But the severest problem I had was HIV. My wife had died of this disease some months previously, and my death and the death of my daughter were predicted for the near future. ... When I began reading Science and Health for the first time, I was greedy to read it fully. I learned that I belonged to

God, no matter how much the world believes in the strength of evil. I began to pray, seeing my daughter and myself as pure and whole by understanding that we were made up of qualities that God gives, such as love, intelligence, beauty, harmony, honesty, joy, strength, freedom.....I asked a Christian Science practitioner to treat us. She reminded me that God made man moral and good, and would not let His children lack or be deficient in anything, especially our immune system. There is no law of incurability, she assured us. And she affirmed that nothing bad could threaten my health or the health of my daughter. In turning wholly to God in prayer, I learned that God's thoughts tell us how to live with courage and be totally free from fear of all kinds. When we returned to my doctor to see the state of our disease, the doctor diagnosed that neither my daughter nor I had HIV. The doctor himself was very surprised, and the test was done three times. Not only the AIDS, but also other diseases like malaria, abscesses, a deep wound, and so on were healed by prayer. God, Truth, exempted us from disease. (Tite, 2008)<sup>20</sup>

This man's experience with his own healing and the healing of his daughter cemented his faith in Christian Science and provided him glimpses of the Godly city that exists beyond error, sin, and mortality. Through his faith, this man was healed. His body was no longer "abnormal", but became perfect. Emphasis on demonstrations such as these gives CS members more than just a hope in some future salvation. It tells them that salvation, perfection, heaven do not have to wait, and that the attainment of them in this life is simply a matter of adjusting one's state of mind.

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<sup>20</sup> No further documentation of this story of healing is offered.

Leaving this veil of tears for a metaphysical Zion is not always without complications to the material, however, and consequences for the individual body of the believer often follow. Since its inception in the late nineteenth century, the Christian Science church has often had need to defend itself against accusations that it is a dangerous religion, responsible for the death of innocents who are denied proper medical care in lieu of Christian Science mental treatment. Not every follower is as fortunate as the man who was cured of HIV and other maladies. Often, when a child loses his or her life during Christian Science treatment, parents, practitioners, and even the church are put on trial by the news media and state courts. The following example is typical of such struggles.

In June of 1977, Matthew, the infant son of Douglas and Rita Swan, received Christian Science treatment for an intense and recurring fever.<sup>21</sup> In praying over him, the practitioner said: “Matthew, you can’t be sick. God is your life. Your life can’t be subject to the laws of matter. There is no death.” Matthew’s parents were not comforted by these words. In fact, practitioners had worked to treat the boy on three previous occasions without apparent consequence. His mother particularly was losing faith as the days dragged on and Matthew’s condition continued to worsen, despite the efforts of a number of practitioners. One night, as their son screamed in pain, the Swans wanted to turn to a physician for help. Sensing their alarm, their practitioner told them that Matthew’s increased sensation of pain was a sign that the healing was beginning to take place. A Christian Science nurse was called. She spoke with the Swans, calming their fears, and recommended that Matthew drink orange juice. When she left, it seemed that

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<sup>21</sup> This story brought Christian Science into the headlines when it was reported on a Phil Donahue television show in 1979. Quotations are taken from (Cass, 1987) and the re-telling of the story in (Schoepflin, 2003).

the boy's pain had subsided, even though his parents would later recall that he was "delirious and totally incoherent" at the time.

Several days later, the Swan's practitioner came to their home to look after Matthew. Upon seeing him, she took courage and announced, "He used to be lethargic and paralyzed. Now look at him, he can move so freely! Everything looks lovely now...except the head." However, it did not seem that the practitioner and Matthew's mother were seeing the same boy. To Rita, Matthew appeared to be "totally incoherent and thrashing around wildly." Later, as Matthew's condition noticeably deteriorated, the practitioner also began to worry. Suggesting that maybe a fall had broken a bone in his neck, causing pain and listlessness, she recommended that the parents take him to be x-rayed.<sup>22</sup> When hospital staff at the emergency room discovered the severity of Matthew's condition, they did their best to treat him. Five days after he was admitted to the hospital, Matthew died of meningitis. It had been three weeks since his fever began.

Unfortunately, the Christian Science pursuit of Zion has been plagued by many such casualties, and its harsh opinion of "mortal mind" has similarly alienated the church from secular America (Woodward, 1987). A seemingly contradictory opinion of reality—one that exalts the spiritual above the physical, to the danger of the latter—puts the religion in a troublesome position both politically and in the courts of public opinion (Schoepflin, 2003), and can make it difficult for the individual member to justify CS practices to his or her own self. However, the careful practice of CS nullifies such

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<sup>22</sup> X-rays and the setting of broken bones are acceptable medical treatments to the Christian Scientist because they are "mechanical" in nature, meaning that the bones need to be put together before the spiritual healing can take place. Eddy says: "Until the advancing age admits the efficacy and supremacy of Mind, it is better to leave surgery and the adjustment of broken bones and dislocations to the fingers of a surgeon, while the mental healer confines himself chiefly to mental reconstruction and to the prevention of inflammation" (S&H 401:27).

concerns by recruiting the individual member to discipline herself in a way that not only supports CS doctrine, but personalizes and intensifies the experience of it.

*Techniques of the Self in Christian Science*

The faithful practice of Christian Science also involves what Foucault refers to as a critical ontology of the self (1993). This ontology is “at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them...in the care brought to the process of putting historico-critical reflection to the test of concrete practices” (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984, p. 50). In order to find inner peace in Christian Science (and many other religious societies), one must first know oneself. In CS, the ontology of the self is especially critical, because a spiritualized perception of who one is radically rejects the material assumptions of the present, mortal state. Therefore, an intimate knowledge of the true nature of the self—that every individual is one with God, is God’s perfect child—is imperative to the successful practice of Christian Science.

In addition to this critical ontology of one’s self, Christian Science supports its own specific technology of the self. According to Foucault, technologies of the self are techniques which permit individuals to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves, and to attain a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power, and so on.

(1993, p. 203)

Generally speaking, this means that men (and women) are able to “transform themselves”, to shape themselves into new, perfected beings. This metamorphosis is enacted through the careful practice of self-discipline, dependent on self-knowledge and a strict dedication to the desired outcome. In CS, this means careful cultivation of thought. Because all mind is part of the one Mind, meditation, learning, and thinking are all key to achieving health and spirituality.

Christian subjectivity broadly conceived achieves two principal aims: first, it makes the self a subject of study; second, it makes the self subject to a higher authority (which is also the self). Often described as the “hermeneutic of the self,” this practice literally involves the careful and trained interpretation of oneself—including thoughts as well as actions. While traditional hermeneutic interpretation begins with the scholarly consideration of the Bible and all of its possible interpretations (J. K. Smith, 1993), the hermeneutics of the self similarly requires the knowledgeable consideration of a complicated subject. In evaluating a text such as the Bible, culture, politics, and historical context also come into play. In evaluating the self, one must similarly recognize that factors that seem to be “outside” the object of study are actually intricately interwoven into the fabric of the “private” self.

The susceptibility of every person to the influence of other persons, events, and circumstances is precisely what necessitates the study of the self from an “objective” distance, or by the unbiased critique of one’s self by a different part of one’s self. As demonstrated by Bernauer and Carrette (2004), one must not be one’s self anymore when he becomes a Christian subject. In this way, it would seem that Christianity supports Plato’s idea of the dual nature of the soul—that there are multiple parts of “who I am”

that observe and critique one another. Often, the subjectification of the self is demonstrated through the dominance of the spirit over the body (in an Augustinian struggle between the temporal and the spiritual nature of the self). As this type of self-discipline is practiced, the spiritual being has sovereignty over the physical being. Conversely, when the physical—with its base lusts and selfish desires—overpowers the spiritual, the individual is seen as unbalanced. The object of Christianity, then, is to empower the spiritual self in his quest for dominance of the physical self. Although the object is a peaceful Zion, this type of pursuit ultimately leads to a war within oneself, where one is always sure to win, and just as surely destined to lose. With this win-win/lose-lose mentality, what is really at stake? Although the self remains in charge no matter which part is victorious, neither self remains unscathed. The constant need to reassert the dominance of either the physical or the spiritual over the other results in a never-ending disharmony and constant confusion that makes the internal battleground of the self perhaps the most fundamental stage for the playing out of political power in all of its messy, complicated, and inescapable variations (Foucault, 1993).

Today, the war of self versus self is seen in the CS struggle between the physical and mental (as well as in the LDS conflicts between Zionism and patriotism). In CS theology and practice, the physical self becomes the object (or non-object) of study. Because CS members believe that the physical self does not exist, it is ironic that this (non-) aspect of the self attracts so much attention and makes up such a large portion of CS doctrine. To the CS faithful, the physical is denied in deference to the spiritual—however, this preference of one “self” to the other is taken to an extreme. The internal struggle for the CS member is not (spiritual) self versus (physical) self, then. Rather, it is

(mental) self versus (mental) self. CS doctrine acts to discipline the mental perception of one's own reality, eventually culminating in the realization that there is only one self, and that is the self of the mind, the self of God.<sup>23</sup> By pronouncing truth, CS shapes the mental work of its faithful followers.

Taken literally, the hermeneutic approach of CS allows one to read, study, and interpret oneself as a text. This approach assumes, of course, that the “reader” is knowledgeable. Additionally, it privileges the reader above the text in a certain sense, in as much as she is able to articulate precisely what it is that the text “means.” In this sense, the CS interpretation of the body is especially fascinating. On first glance, it may appear that this is a very simple reading—namely, the CS member, instead of “reading” and interpreting the text of the body, will first insist that it does not exist. However, the interpretation does not end there. Like the power of the reader over the text, the power of the CS mind over the body is a literal power that can cure illness and ideally overcome death and every sorrow of the world.<sup>24</sup> When suffering from the belief of an illness, for example, the faithful CS member will be able to assess what self-imposed weaknesses her mind has succumbed to, and by understanding the faults of the self, be able to redirect the energies of the self to the proper spiritual channels (which are not susceptible to the belief in pain). Thus, the constant denial of the self by the self is key to salvation in CS.

Additionally, the same mental powers that allow the CS practitioner to engage in “absent healing” (where a patient is healed without the need of the physical presence of a healer) allowed for Eddy to participate in absent interrogation of an individual's mind.

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<sup>23</sup> Yes, it remains ironic that there would be one self sufficiently “outside” of one's self in order to recognize that there is only *one* self. It would seem that, by this standard, CS does not stand up to immanent critique. Therefore, this is an area that requires further investigation.

<sup>24</sup> In its most pure application, CS would allow the practitioner to be free from the false belief in mortality and enter heaven without ever leaving what outsiders perceive to be “this world.”

Again, this is the power of hypnosis [according to Foucault (2006), the dominance of one will over another, or the use of “reality” as discipline] which allows for Eddy to “read” the mind of any individual member at any given time. The prospects of this power and its influence on the self’s discipline of self are staggering. When one’s most personal being may be invaded and assessed at any time by an outside authority, there is constant motivation for self-improvement.<sup>25</sup> This results in a hierarchy of psychiatric power from which the CS member is never fully freed (Foucault, 2006). More will be said about the psychiatric power of the CS in a later chapter.

What is the result of the Christian subjectivity of the Christian Scientist? Perhaps most notably, aside from the obvious tension between the (non-existent) physical and the sovereignty of the mental/spiritual, there is a resultant struggle with the US government which ultimately seems to privilege the physical self above the spiritual. This ideological separation puts Eddy and her followers in the company of Thoreau and other transcendentalists, who, in nearly the same time and place as Eddy, also believed in the supremacy of the individual spirit (although the definition of spirit, in this sense, is different). In fact, it was a similar underlying dissatisfaction with the laws of the US government that led Thoreau to pledge his ultimate allegiance to a higher law. Of course, Thoreau ended up in jail, and so have a number of faithful Christian Scientists who have defied the juridical laws of the land in favor of their own spiritual law (Schoepflin, 2003). In these instances, the hermeneutic approach to self appears to have been met with political limitation. The spiritual/mental world of the CS, however, is separate from the political government of the US, leaving the mind of the individual free to practice as it

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<sup>25</sup> This idea seems to be related to the threat of the “gaze” in Foucault’s explanation of Bentham’s panopticon as a penal technology (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*).

will (although not in health-care or legal cases), while only the (non-existent?) body remains subject to the law of the land.

With complications such as these, the unique theology of Christian Science makes it appear to be out-of-reach for (or perhaps out-of-touch with) mainstream American Christianity. Still, its biopolitical system of governing the here-and-now is problematic for the state and federal governments which also have a vested interest in and responsibility for the health and well-being of individuals and populations. Therefore, although the practice of Christian Science by individual US citizens may appear to be a private and personal decision, it is not without broader implications for the security of the secular City of Man.

## Chapter Three

### **The LDS Church and its American Setting**

Decades before Eddy began to teach her metaphysical Science near Boston, the Second Great Awakening was inspiring the hearts and minds of thousands all around the US—especially in what would later be known as the “burned-over district” of upstate New York (Cross, 1982). Revivals in the area were frequent and had a reputation for being particularly energetic. According to historian David Reynolds (2008, p. 129), “To call these early revivals emotional orgies is an understatement. Wailing, singing, and speaking in tongues were common.”

Given this lively setting, it is not surprising, therefore, that Tocqueville wrote “the religious atmosphere of the country was the first thing that struck me on arrival in the United States” (2002, p. 280). Reflecting on his travels through the United States in the heart of the Jacksonian era<sup>26</sup>, he further observed that religion “should...be considered the first of [US] political institutions”, reasoning that “if it does not give [Americans] the taste for freedom, it singularly facilitates their use of it” (2002, p. 280). It was his perception that American religion was central to the function and ideology of democracy, both the way it is theorized and the way that theory is translated into practice, and that it stabilized other American institutions, including the government. He found that religion operated differently in America, primarily because “the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom” were not in conflict here. Instead, religion and freedom were “united intimately with one another: they reigned together on the same soil” (p. 282). In fact, Tocqueville reasons that the “democratic and republican” habits of religion in America

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<sup>26</sup> Tocqueville traveled in America for nine months beginning in 1831. Andrew Jackson served as President from 1829-1837.

combined with a sense of piety to make the US “the place in the world where the Christian religion has most preserved genuine power over souls” (pp. 275, 278).

This power was sometimes expressed by “exercises” or bodily movements (Reynolds, 2008, p. 129). One observer of a revival noted that, under the influence of this power, “[b]old, brazen-fronted blasphemers were literally cut down by ‘the sword of the spirit’” and that “[u]nder the preaching of the gospel, men would drop to the ground, as suddenly as if they had been smitten by the lightning of Heaven” (qtd. in *ibid*, p. 129). Others were moved to barking at spirits to catch them in trees, dancing, shaking, or the “[h]ysterical sobbings, convulsive groans, shrieks and screams the most appalling” noted by Trollope (1949, p. 86). These were bodily manifestations of spiritual power working in the lives of the American people.

In addition to song, dance, preaching, and prayer, healings and other demonstrations of faith were common in New England revivals during the early part of the nineteenth century (Cross, 1982; Hatch, 1989). For the faithful who lived on the edge of the western frontier, physical strength was a necessary precursor for success. A poorly-educated but otherwise independently-minded Jacksonian placed much of his hope in his own ability to work. Therefore, sickness and other disabilities were viewed as destructive evils which might properly be treated through religion. Through this particular show of biopolitical power, religious healings not only had the potential to save a man’s soul, but his farm and family livelihood, as well.

It was into this rich setting of distinctly American revivalism—already interested in the mix of strong-willed independence and religious biopower—that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was born. Just as with Eddy and her Christian Science,

culture and politics also helped to shape the early history of the LDS church, including its decidedly biopolitical theology and its fascination with the spiritual nature of all things physical (land, bodies, etc.). Through the Church's history, these physical/material theologies have proven to be contentious, and the LDS adherence to personal standards of bodily care and reverence for the land have created problems for them with both their neighbors and the US government. Today, many of these conflicts have been resolved; however, deeply-seated remnants of original LDS biopolitical practices remain an important part of the Mormon ideology. Because the attitudes and practices of church members today owe so much to the pioneers of their cause—and the radical politics they espoused—a brief explanation of LDS history and theology is in order. This history and the doctrine it inspires reveal a theological dedication to not only the souls but also the bodies of the LDS faithful. Furthermore, the LDS as example of “the American religion” (Bloom, 2006) poses important questions regarding the proper role of government in regulating the practice of personal belief, which remain relevant today.

### *A History of the LDS Church*

Like the CS, the LDS church had humble beginnings, but began with extravagant claims. In the spring of 1820, a fourteen-year old boy emerged from the woods in rural upstate New York with a story that would challenge the very foundations of religious belief in America. He was not a scholar and had no theological training. In fact, Joseph Smith had attended church meetings only a few times in his life, despite the overwhelming fervor of the “burned-over” district that surrounded him. He attended camp meetings and Sunday services for various sects, but found himself ultimately dissatisfied by the way that each group seemed to contradict the others (J. Smith, 1978c).

He worried for his soul and felt compelled to be baptized in some church to ensure his eternal salvation. But still he was confused. He wondered: “What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?” (*Joseph Smith History* 1: 10). One night, having been especially troubled by the tumult of religious sectarianism around him, Smith found special meaning in a verse he read in the New Testament: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God” (James 1:5, KJV). Of this experience, he said, “Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine” (*JSH* 1:12).

Prompted by the promise of this verse, Smith decided to ask God which church he should join. Of the spectacular experience which followed, he later recounted:

It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally. After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. (*JSH* 1: 14-15)

In answer to his simple question, Smith received an extraordinary answer: in vision, he saw God and Jesus Christ, who told him to join none of the churches because “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (*JSH* 1:19). They spoke to him as one man speaks to another, and called him by name. They were “personages”, in the image of a man, “whose brightness and glory def[ied] all description” (*JSH* 1:17).

This “first vision”, as it came to be known, solidified many of what would later become among the key tenets of Smith’s new religion; namely, that God was a being like a man, that the fullness of religious truth had been lost from the earth, and that God speaks to man today (Church Educational System, 2003). This first vision also solidified key points of LDS theology of the body—namely, by claiming that God himself had a body of flesh and bones (J. Smith, 2007).

The revelation that none of the existent faiths pleased God was not much comfort to Smith, who was told specifically to join none of them. Instead, it would be up to him to usher in “the restoration of all things”—to bring back God’s whole truth to the earth (J. Smith, 1978a). His vision in the place his followers would later call the “sacred grove” was only the beginning of what would be a life-long pursuit of Smith’s: to re-establish the truth that was missing from the earth. It was a passion he would suffer and eventually give his life for (R. V. Remini, 2002). At the age of fourteen, Smith was derided by the local preachers with whom he confided the story of his revelation. But he kept up his work nonetheless, encouraged by his family and content to be an outsider if it meant doing what he believed to be right (J. Smith, 1978c).

In 1827, this meant going to the Hill Cumorah (a location near his home), as instructed by the Angel Moroni, and collecting golden plates which had been hidden there sometime before 600 AD. On the plates was written the history of an ancient people who had traveled from Jerusalem 600 years before Christ and settled in the Americas.<sup>27</sup> Some have argued that the translation of this record, later published as *The*

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<sup>27</sup> *The Book of Mormon* also briefly tells the story of another people, the Jaredites, who came to America after the world’s languages were confused at the tower of Babel. The Nephite and Jaredite civilizations overlapped for a short time, though neither one discovered the other until there was only one Jaredite left. The Mulekites also traveled from Jerusalem to America shortly after the Nephites did, and later the two

*Book of Mormon* (named after the ancient Nephite prophet who edited the writings around 500 BC), is an eighteenth-century document (Brodie, 1995). However, Smith and his followers saw it as “another testament of Christ”, meant to complement the Old and New Testaments. Rumors that Smith had in his possession a “golden bible” soon circulated in the area, and he and his family were under constant threat from those who sought to profit from his find (Bushman, 2005).<sup>28</sup> In order to find the peace necessary for him to translate the plates as he had been commanded to do, Smith moved in with his wife’s family in Pennsylvania. There, with friends acting as scribes, he worked to translate the ancient record using sacred tools and his own “seer stone”—a stone he had picked up in his younger years and used to help him look for treasure—to “read” the meanings of the characters (Bushman, 2005). The book was eventually published in 1830, with the help of friend Martin Harris, who mortgaged his farm in order to fund the project (Church Educational System, 2003).<sup>29</sup>

That same year, Smith formally established his church, calling it the Church of Christ (later The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).<sup>30</sup> Though it had humble

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groups met and merged into one single civilization. Those who chose to not follow God’s commandments were called Lamanites. The Hebraic origin of these civilizations makes them God’s chosen people, just as Smith and his followers claimed to be. They were saved from being led captive into Babylon and led to a “promised land” which was “choice above all others”. Speaking of North America, the book says, “this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off” (Ether 2:10).

<sup>28</sup> The Smith family were also indigent themselves, and Joseph and others were sometimes tempted to sell the plates in exchange for a better standard of living. However, even when the book was published, it did not make any money for its translator.

<sup>29</sup> Harris eventually lost his farm in this venture, and his wife left him. In 1836, when Smith’s bank failed, Harris left the LDS church and joined a splinter movement led by James A. Strang, who claimed to be a new prophet. Harris never recounted his testimony of *The Book of Mormon* and the golden plates which he claims were shown to him in vision, and he was eventually re-baptized into the LDS church.

<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, Eddy also wished to call her Church “the Church of Christ”. However, both she and Smith changed their minds once they learned that the name had already been taken. Interestingly, both the CS and LDS religions, as churches of Christ, represent different idealizations of Christ from those advocated by mainstream Christianity in the US.

beginnings, it eventually met with success. However, as membership grew, so did the church's problems. By the time the Church was formally founded, Smith was already looking to move elsewhere to escape his growing reputation as a necromancer, visionary, and treasure-hunter (Bushman, 2005). These scandalous reputations came from his claims to have spoken with God, Christ, and angels, and his discovery of golden plates in a hill near his home. What is more, neighbors were upset with Smith's seemingly heretical doctrine, which ultimately convicted all other existing churches as being false or mistaken, and theorized new relationships between God and Man. Due to the hostilities inspired by these differences, Smith moved his growing flock from place to place for the next fourteen years, insistent that they all gather together to build Zion.<sup>31</sup>

In an 1831 document, Smith demonstrates what would quickly become a temporal fascination with a spiritual-geographical destination. Speaking of the physical location of Zion within the borders of the US, he reports the following revelation:

HEARKEN, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints. Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. (*D&C 57: 1*)

Regarding the geographical location of Zion, the word of the Lord gets even more specific, adding, "Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the center place [for Zion]; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from

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<sup>31</sup> During Smith's lifetime, the LDS community was headquartered in Palmyra, New York; Kirtland, Ohio; Independence, Missouri; and Nauvoo, Illinois. Shortly after his death by mob violence, the group relocated to the Rocky Mountains, settling what would eventually become Utah, Idaho, Eastern Nevada and Northern Arizona.

the courthouse” (*D&C 57: 2-3*). This physical geography of Zion and the relocation and building effort which it necessitated are further manifestations of a biopolitical theology which privileges the land and the body as spiritual entities.

In consequence of a number of revelations regarding the actual location of Zion, the LDS church moved from Ohio to Missouri. There they built buildings and began to practice “the United Order”—an economic system which promoted material equality among the Saints. However, the best efforts of the LDS faithful to found Zion there were spoiled as their unpopularity followed them west: though land was abundant on the frontiers, tolerance for Smith and his new religion was low, and violence often prompted the church to give up its geopolitical claims. In the end, due to persecutions and hostilities, Zion would not be built in New York, Ohio, Missouri, or Illinois, despite the tireless industry of the LDS members.<sup>32</sup> Each time the congregation was ousted by its neighbors, it fled further west, toward the edges of “civilization” and the borders of the American wilderness. However, even among the rugged frontiersmen, the Mormons could not find any acceptance. Violence often broke out between the Mormons and their neighbors over issues such as the practice of polygamy or Smith’s theocratic-political leadership. For example, Smith himself was tarred and feathered, families terrorized, crops ruined, printing presses destroyed, and an entire community was massacred at Haun’s Mill (Church Educational System, 2003).<sup>33</sup> Eventually, Smith himself was killed at the hands of an angry mob of his neighbors.

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<sup>32</sup> LDS members, many of whom were already poor, often lost all of their property as they were encouraged to participate in the LDS policy of communitarianism, or the United Order.

<sup>33</sup> Although the LDS suffered the brunt of this maltreatment, they were in some cases instigators of violence themselves. Such retaliations only served to increase animosity toward them.

Dates	Location of LDS Headquarters	Happenings
1830-1831	Palmyra, New York	Church founded, <i>Book of Mormon</i> published
1831-1838	Kirtland, Ohio	First temple built, Smith's bank failed
1838-1840	Independence, Missouri	Cornerstone laid for temple, problems with neighbors escalate
1840-1846	Nauvoo, Illinois	Second temple built, Smith jailed, Smith and brother Hyrum killed, Young chosen as successor
1847-Present	Salt Lake City, Utah	Four temples built in nineteenth-century, <sup>34</sup> Young serves as governor (1850-58), Utah War (1857-58), church leaders go into hiding (1885), polygamy repealed (1890).

*Table 2. Timeline of the movement of the LDS church.*

<sup>34</sup> There are 13 LDS temples in Utah today, and 128 total in the world, with dozens more under construction.

The troubled history of early LDS relations with US culture and government stems partly from the religion's emphasis on an alternative view of economic order and physical well-being as well as spirituality. These materialist doctrines provide the foundation for what has been called a peculiarly American religion (Bloom, 2006)—one which sacralizes both the American experience (i.e., a spirit of rugged individualism, a strong work ethic, and a shared myth of the US as a promised land) and the land itself. Adding to this peculiarity is a distinctly biological preoccupation in LDS doctrine and practice which began, perhaps, with Smith's first vision and subsequent realization that the glorified being of God was like man, indicating that flesh is not a mortal punishment, but an essential part of godliness. The doctrines which stem from this belief continue to shape the LDS biopolitical perspective today.

*The doctrine of the LDS Church.* The LDS Church espouses a restorationist doctrine: Like Eddy after him, Smith believed that it was his calling to restore primitive and unadulterated Christianity to the earth. However, unlike Christian Science, the LDS version of Christianity has distinctly Hebraic roots. Rather than focusing on reinterpreting the Old Testament to fit more seamlessly with the New (as Eddy had), Smith re-centered his Christianity as a covenant religion and claimed to espouse the same truths that had been taught and preached by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This dedication to ancient tradition is apparent in Mormon theology and culture. According to Richard Bushman, a critical scholar of Mormonism, “many of the most distinguishing characteristics of Mormonism are Hebraic” (2008, p. 62). Bushman goes on to comment on Smith's unique strategy for building his church, saying that “[h]is restoration can be thought of as purging the Hellenistic influences in Christianity and reviving the Hebraic”

(2008, p. 63). For example, “[w]hen he undertook to educate his unlearned followers, Smith passed over the classical languages and hired a Jewish instructor to teach them Hebrew” (2008, p. 63). These Hebraic elements have profound effects on LDS culture and practice, especially those relating to the treatment of land and bodies.

Like other Christian churches, the LDS “believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly” (Articles of Faith 8). The stipulation for correct translation is a reference to the Mormon belief that many of the truths of God’s word have been lost, either through overt or accidental means, throughout the centuries. Smith, like Eddy, offers his own translation of the Bible (titled “*Joseph Smith Translation*” or *JST*), through which he was able to restore some of the lost or hidden meanings of texts.<sup>35</sup> In addition to the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, members of the LDS church also hold *The Book of Mormon* (translated by Smith), the *Doctrine and Covenants* (God’s word revealed to Smith), and *The Pearl of Great Price* (consisting of the Books of Abraham and Moses, also translated by Smith) to be scripture.

The acceptance of new scripture revealed to or through Smith is one example of continuing revelation, another key point of LDS theology. *The Book of Mormon* teaches that God has more to say to his people than can be found in the Bible alone. Speaking of a future time, when people would decry Smith’s words, *The Book of Mormon* quotes God as saying: “because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written” (2 Ne 29:10). Similarly, the LDS believe that God continues to speak to man through prophets on the earth today. An article of their faith claims: “We believe all that God has revealed, all

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<sup>35</sup> Neither Eddy nor Smith “translated” the Bible from its original languages. Instead, both based their reinterpretations on the King James Version.

that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (A of F 9). They esteem Smith as a prophet to whom God speaks, and leaders of the church since his death have also been called by that same title.

Church members also believe that miracles, including the healing of the sick, continue today wherever faith is found. The logic of this position claims that if the demonstration of miracles follows the spirit of God, then to say that miracles have ceased would be to say that God is a changeable being, or that he has ceased to have the power to work miracles (Moroni 9:19). *The Book of Mormon* warns that if the day comes when miracles and other manifestations of spiritual gifts are not found on the earth, “wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of their unbelief, and all is vain” (Moroni 7:37). Miracles are demonstrations of the spirit, and will follow those who have the spirit of God. What is more, the LDS believe that their church leaders (and all members, to some degree) are entitled to inspiration and revelation from God (Bushman, 2008; J. Smith, 2007). This means that organizational structures of the church and other seemingly timely policies (such as allowing blacks the priesthood in 1978) are divinely sanctioned (Martins, 2007).

New revelation is necessary to the LDS church because they believe that just as the Bible lost some of its truth, Christ’s true gospel was also lost (Church Educational System, 2003; J. Smith, 2007). According to them, the authority to act in God’s name (the priesthood) was lost in the early centuries AD, as Christ’s disciplines and most devoted followers were persecuted, chased, and killed. This led to a period of world religious history that the Church calls the great apostasy, which ushered in centuries of

darkness and perversion of the true system of governing God’s church (Church Educational System, 2003; J. Smith, 2007). Because all authority from God was taken away, the LDS believe it was impossible to build the true church on a reformed foundation of another sect. Instead, Smith needed to start from scratch and with the help of divinely sanctioned authority. His published work, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, is a conversation between himself and God regarding the administrative details of the restoration (J. Smith, 1978c).

Members of the LDS church believe in God, the Father; in Jesus Christ, his Son; and in the Holy Ghost. The first two members of the godhead are physical beings, with bodies like a man’s, but glorified. The Holy Ghost is “a personage of spirit” and has no body (*D&C 130:22*). Smith’s perception of divinity is another key difference between Mormonism and mainstream Christianity. In the LDS church, God created man in his own image—and by this the LDS understand that God looks as they do. Smith’s vision and subsequent angelic visitations attest to this fact.<sup>36</sup> This doctrine emphasizes the spiritual significance of the corporeal body because, according to Smith, resurrected beings like God and Jesus Christ have bodies of flesh and bones. The flesh is therefore not sinful *a priori*. On the contrary, it is absolutely necessary to man’s salvation. The LDS approach to governance holds a biopolitical perspective that celebrates the body at the same time that it lays a foundation for the regulation of its proper, godly uses—such as for service, joy, and family.

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<sup>36</sup> In fact, the *Doctrine and Covenants* even contains a guide for how a faithful member can tell if a visiting spirit is a heavenly messenger or an agent of the devil. This involves asking to shake hands with the visitor (*D&C 129: 8*). An angel of God has no flesh and blood (having not been yet resurrected), and will not offer to shake hands. An angel of the devil will try to deceive you by attempting to shake your hand—however, there will be no matter to touch.

Furthermore, like the CS, the LDS reinterpretation of Christianity includes a reinterpretation of the creation story. The folklore of the LDS version depicts God as an organizer of matter—not its creator (Bloom, 2006). This basic theological point emphasizes the eternal nature of matter in the LDS viewpoint, leading to their understanding that matter itself is spiritual (Bushman, 2008).<sup>37</sup> Once again, matter is deified, making LDS theology in this respect precisely the opposite of CS. Not only does physical matter exist in LDS theology, it is considered to be co-eternal with God. Matter also has an important spiritual purpose because the earth itself allows man a place to come and be tested—to suffer physical ills and trials. Additionally, the LDS believe that the earth will one day be exalted, and as such, will become a “new heaven” (as in Revelation 21:1-2), a place for the best of the saints to spend their eternities.

Temporal matters, therefore, are of spiritual concern for the LDS. This is one reason why they have worked so diligently to establish Zion as its own social-cultural-political space. Even today, local districts of the LDS church are called “wards” constituting the city of Zion (Bushman, 2008). In the early days of the religion, Zion was understood to be an egalitarian society, and church doctrine supports the view that material wealth is to be shared.<sup>38</sup> Church members today continue to believe that the LDS system for providing for temporal welfare is “the world’s greatest economic security

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<sup>37</sup> Hanks and Williams (2003, p. 59) suggest that a belief in sacred objects (such as the golden plates) caused the LDS to develop a material culture early on.

<sup>38</sup> For example, early church members are asked to give up their property to pay for church business (such as the printing of *The Book of Mormon*) and live communally in what was called the united order. This theology is not only practical, but spiritual as well. In fact, some taught that inequality itself was a sin. According to early Mormon leader Orson Pratt:

Unequal possession of that which God has made for the benefit of all His children is sin. All nation, kindreds, and people are in sin because of this inequality. The Saints are still in sin so far as they approve of this unequal possession; and we shall remain in sin until we make exertions to put this inequality away from us. We must be one, not only in heavenly riches, but one in earthly riches. (Pratt, 1854, p. 58)

program” (Fluckinger, 1980, p. 71). This includes the commandment for all members to store one year’s supply of life’s necessities (food, water, money, and other consumables) wherever possible and become self-sufficient by planting gardens and saving money and other resources (Rudd, 1995). Preparations such as these may be seen as a practical manifestation of the Jacssonian tendency toward self-interest well understood: as the saints care for their own temporal welfare, they feel that they are also qualifying themselves for spiritual blessings.

Of course, members of the LDS church are also concerned about their spiritual preparedness and well-being. But even spiritual blessings appear to be tied to the physical body in their theology. For example, the Church emphasizes the importance of the family as part of God’s plan for man’s eternal happiness. According to them “the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children” and is “ordained of God” (Hinckley, Faust, & Monson, 1995 para. 1,7). The LDS believe that because families are so important, family relationships continue after mortal life ends. In order for families to be reunited after death, they must be sealed together in sacred ceremonies. Part of the ritual of sealing (or joining) families together takes place in Mormon temples. Unlike regular meetinghouses (which are used for Sunday worship and activities throughout the week), temples are dedicated for a higher purpose and access to them is restricted to those who have been interviewed and found worthy to enter by their local and regional priesthood authorities.<sup>39</sup> In them, marriage ceremonies are

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<sup>39</sup> The priesthood is the primary source of authority in the Mormon Church. Smith referred to it as the legal authority to administer in the Church (J. Smith, 1978b, pp. 256-259). The priesthood is limited to worthy men over the age of 12, and gives them what many members describe as the power to act in God’s name. It is precisely this authority which Smith claims was lost to the world before the fullness of truth was restored through the LDS church.

Priesthood authority is conferred on a person through “the laying on of hands”, a ritual where priesthood-holding men place their hands on the head of another person and offer a special prayer or

performed “for time and all eternity” rather than “‘til death do us part”, among other things.<sup>40</sup>

Another religious ritual with biopolitical import which takes place in temples involves church members being baptized for and in behalf of their dead ancestors (J. B. Allen, Embry, & Mehr, 1994). The reasoning behind this is that Christ’s declaration that man can only enter heaven if he is “born of water and of the spirit” (John 3:5)—which the LDS interpret as being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Both of these ordinances require a physical body (to actually be immersed or have hands placed upon it), so the LDS believe they must be performed by proxy for those who died without the opportunity to join themselves to the true church. Because spirits cannot partake of physical ordinances such as baptism (which, according to the LDS tradition, requires immersion in water), bodies are required. Therefore, even the most sacred ordinances of the LDS temples belie a spiritual dedication to the importance of the physical body.

It also ought to be noted that temples are the only places where these most sacred ordinances are performed, and in order to enter temples, LDS members must discipline their bodies. Specifically, in order to be able to participate in sealing ordinances, which Mormons believe allow them to be together with their family in heaven after death, members must adhere to a strict moral code, including abstinence before marriage and obedience to the dietary code, the Word of Wisdom (these codes will be further discussed

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blessing (this is also the way that healings and other ordinances of the Church work). In this way, it is a physical transfer of spiritual authority. Smith claims that the priesthood authority was restored to the earth through a literal laying on of hands, when John the Baptist, and Peter, James, and John appeared to Smith and others and physically bestowed the authority upon them.

<sup>40</sup> For more on LDS temple worship, see Dean L. Larsen’s *Mormon Temples* (2008), and David Buerger’s *The Mysteries of Godliness* (2002).

in Chapter Four). Once more, these doctrinal practices underscore a deeply-seated belief in the importance of the body (that it has spiritual significance on its own behalf), and suggest that elements of the same biopolitical theology which set the LDS apart from their contemporaries in the nineteenth century still exist in the church today.

*Christ in the LDS Church.* In 1915, LDS Church leader James Talmage published a book that quickly became the standard for how LDS members view and understand the mission and meaning of Christ. The book, *Jesus the Christ*, does not begin, as do many histories of Jesus, with his virgin birth, nor does it end with his ascension into heaven after his resurrection. Instead, it encompasses the entire LDS vision of Christ, from his pre-mortal role and ministry to his modern manifestations and revelations to Mormon prophets (Talmage, 1915). This is the LDS Christ—not limited to or even fully defined by his mortal life. His is life everlasting, and no history can contain the fullness of his works. This theology of Christ encourages unique LDS interpretations of the joint significance of spirit, body, and mortality.

LDS stories of Christ usually begin in the pre-mortal existence, where all who are now on earth lived before they came here. All were spirit children of God, but were not made by him. Here again is another key LDS departure from mainstream Christian creeds: as stated previously, the LDS God is not a creator (Bloom, 2006; Bushman, 2008). He organized existing matter to form the earth (thus giving matter itself a spirituality, as it is co-eternal with God), and likewise organized the spirits of men, who, through this act became his children (Bushman, 2008). As Bushman explains it, this theology is deeply rooted in the American experience. He says, “The God of the American religion [Mormonism] is not a creator-God, because the American never *was*

created, and so the American has at least part of the God within herself”(2006, p. 113).

The independent (LDS) American, therefore, is co-eternal with God and Christ

(Bushman, 2005, 2008).

What is more, according to LDS theology, each individual has the potential to become like God. Just months before his death, Smith proclaimed this controversial theory at the funeral of a friend (Bushman, 2005). It has been reinterpreted and expanded upon in the decades that followed, but is perhaps still one of the least understood of LDS theologies.<sup>41</sup> Speaking of man’s eternal destiny, Smith said:

God was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret...I might with boldness proclaim from the housetops that God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all. God himself could not create himself... (J. F. Smith, 1972, pp. 342-245)

The LDS argue that this particular theology of man’s god-like potential does not in any way demote God, nor does it necessarily promote man to God’s status. Instead, they understand that man can become “as God”, not become God himself—specifically,

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<sup>41</sup> In 1997, then president of the LDS Church, Gordon Hinckley, was asked by an interviewer for the San Francisco Chronicle:

“Don't Mormons believe that God was once a man?”

Hinckley: “I wouldn't say that. There was a little couplet coined, ‘As man is, God once was. As God is, man may become.’ Now that's more of a couplet than anything else. That gets into some pretty deep theology that we don't know very much about.” (Lattin, 1997)

In another interview that year, Hinckley was asked a similar question:

“Is this the teaching of the church today, that God the Father was once a man like we are?”

He replied: “I don't know that we teach it. I don't know that we emphasize it. I haven't heard it discussed for a long time in public discourse. I don't know. I don't know all the circumstances under which that statement was made. I understand the philosophical background behind it. But I don't know a lot about it and I don't know that others know a lot about it.”(Biema, Gwynne, & Ostling, 1997).

This conversation demonstrates just how unwilling the LDS church is to speak publicly about this still controversial doctrine.

that their potential is to become “gods” with a lower-case “g”. When speaking of the future salvation of man, Smith said of the state of those who were most righteous after the resurrection:

Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.

(D&C 132:20)

This was the case with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Smith went on to explain, because they had kept the commandments, and so “they sit upon thrones, and are not angels, but are gods” (D&C 132: 21).

The potential for all men to become gods (if they are righteous) does not diminish the role of Christ in the LDS church. To return to an earlier thought, the LDS story of Christ begins in the pre-mortal existence, when God told the spirits that they needed to come to earth to procure a body (the body being essential for eventual exaltation and godliness). He knew that sending the spirits to earth would cause some of them to rebel, so he planned to provide a savior for them. Jesus himself (as a pre-mortal spirit) advocated for the plan, and chose to be God’s sacrifice for the immortality of all his children. Thus, Jesus Christ was a leader from before he was born.

Neither did his mission or ministry end after his mortal life. According to LDS theology, Christ appeared to people in the New World shortly after his resurrection, bringing them the same teachings he shared with the Jews in

Jerusalem during his lifetime. What is more, LDS folklore suggests that he may have also shown himself to others of the lost tribes of Israel.<sup>42</sup> More recently, the LDS Christ appeared to Joseph Smith and gave him instruction. Other Latter-day Saint prophets and leaders have testified of Christ, and some have seen him in vision (Church Educational System, 2003; Winder, 2007). The LDS Christ is not dead, nor is he finished with the world. He is industrious, as the Mormon people themselves, and will not rest until his work is finished.

And what is this work? It is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Therefore, Christ’s mission is not fulfilled until this is accomplished in full. Additionally, Christ has an important role in the Millennium, or thousand years of peace. During this time, LDS believe that Christ will rule from the New Jerusalem, built on the American continent (AoF 10). The LDS Christ is always working—not for himself—but for others, just as the faithful LDS member strives to do. He is always preparing and expediting God’s word.

Despite these and other differences, LDS depictions of Christ are much like those of other Christians. For example, they believe in his virgin birth and follow the precepts of his mortal ministry in Jerusalem as given in the New Testament. It might properly be said that the LDS vision of Christ expands upon the Christ of the Nicene creed—he is constantly working for the salvation of his people, saving their souls and paying the price for their sins through his atoning

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<sup>42</sup> This line of thinking is based on the Book of Mormon scripture, which cites Christ speaking to his people in America. He says: AND verily, verily, I say unto you that I have other sheep, which are not of this land, neither of the land of Jerusalem, neither in any parts of that land round about whither I have been to minister” (3 Nephi 16: 1).

sacrifice, though his work is not yet done. In fact, his work will not be finished in any time foreseeable to man. To further his work, he speaks to man today, and sits as the figurative head of the LDS Church. What is more, the LDS Christ is different from the CS Christ, because although the LDS Christ is the savior of all mankind, he is not actually part of (the mind of) all mankind. Additionally, unlike the CS, the LDS Christ has a body, and is inextricably tied to the man Jesus. As an exalted man, his work must continue, and through his work, he brings glory to God.

The LDS ontology of God as organizer and of Christ's work as eternal are both reflected in related doctrines and practices. For them, the Christ who actively works to save the souls of men inspires his followers on earth to do the same—whether that work is building cities, raising families, or preaching the gospel at home or abroad. Because their understanding of Christ reaches both before and after his mortal ministry, LDS members see themselves as eternal beings also. This “eternal perspective”, as many call it, colors their world view and either amplifies or denigrates the experiences of this world. It inspires their action, for they believe that their potential is to one day be as God is, if they live worthy lives.

LDS cultural practices and theological doctrines such as these reflected and supported a nineteenth-century American perspective of the world while simultaneously challenging some of the foundational tenets of secular government and principles of family and economy in the US. According to one commentator, the LDS church, by “encapsulating these themes in revelation, . . . sacralized and legitimated the utopian

nationalism of nineteenth century Americans” (O. K. White, 1978, p. 163). Correlations between Jacksonian-era American values and past and present LDS theology and practice reveal an underlying spirit of hope, optimism, and faith in the individual that helped to shape the Mormon faith and the American people as a whole.

*The LDS Church and Jacksonian Democracy*

The Age of Jackson, during which Smith’s religion made its debut, was a period of radical change (Howe, 2007). Thanks in part to the Second Great Awakening, religious revivalism was a strong political and social force. Additionally, the freedoms of new lands and a new country inspired many to try their hand at their own cultural experiments—some religious, others secular, many communal (Kohl, 1989). Taken together, the politics and spirit of the age set the stage for great expectations and high hopes. During this period, the independently-minded American had the audacity to dream of wealth and comfort as the by-products of his own industry and determination (Watson, 2006). Many were successful in such ventures. Others weren’t. For decades, the LDS followed their dreams to become the people they wanted to be, and, like many other societies which were founded during the same period, what victories they won were wholly ascribable to their own hard work. Therefore, in this and other ways, the early LDS church epitomizes the spirit of the Jacksonian age.

When understood in this light, the LDS church today acts in an interesting way as both harbinger of and threat to American culture. The staying power of the church—the fact that it survived long past the historical spirit which provided its impetus—also says something for its continuing biopolitical traction. Somehow, the radical LDS combination of church and state into its own vision of communal living was able to

outlast hundreds (if not thousands) of other similar experiments that were absorbing the efforts of Americans in the first half of the nineteenth century. From its humble beginnings in rural New York state, the LDS church has become a world wide church with over 13 million members. There is something truly American—remarkably Jacksonian—in this pull-yourself-up-from-your-bootstraps kind of determination and eventual success. Smith started out with nothing: no education, no funding, and few friends, and to that lowly heritage he added his own hard work, faith, and determination, which led him to eventually be revered as the founder of a quickly growing spiritual movement. He was no doubt inspired by the optimism of his age, which would give the hope of success to someone as lowly as he.

Some have noted that the politics and social upheaval of the Jacksonian era were not much different from what the nation experienced in the 1960s (Glenn, 1999). Both periods gave birth to new movements filled with individuals who hoped for a better future—either through political power or the more peaceful power of the spirit. A certain mix of optimism and pessimism (perhaps a realist optimism) strengthened group commitments and brought individuals together. In the Jacksonian period especially, religion was a major part of such movements. While social experiments with communal living, new economics, or free love didn't always require their own, new religious orders, they often subscribed to a philosophy which embraced the metaphysical and emphasized the importance of individual belief (Kohl, 1989). For example, Bronson Alcott's social living experiment at Fruitlands (which his daughter, Louisa, satirized in her story "Transcendental Wild Oats") idealized work, spirituality, and contemplative thought above all earthly comforts (Sears, 1915). His experiment was meant to touch the

individual spirits of men, and although it eventually failed, his family was forever changed by it. Additionally, morality played a strong role in politics during the Jacksonian era—particularly through the temperance and abolitionist movements.

Of course, much was happening to and in America during the early part of the nineteenth century to inspire and motivate these types of change. Not least among the actors was growing strife between the northern and southern states which created an ideological division in the union long before the civil war (R. B. Remini, 1989; Watson, 2006). Sectionalism and threats of secession built upon foreign threats to security from Mexico and Great Britain. Geopolitical disputes and the US assertion of its own Manifest Destiny only further fueled a rising spirit of individualism and a frontier mentality which valued self-sufficiency. In some parts of the country, such as the burned-over district of upstate New York, these political sentiments mixed with religious fervor to inspire and support new religious movements with a particular penchant for the practical.

During the height of Jacksonian democracy and the US love-affair with its own manifest destiny, members of the LDS church became missionaries of the same project. It too wanted space and the freedom to spread its message and image by spreading its borders. A product of its times, and firmly grounded in the Jacksonian political theology of the rugged individual and love (and expansion) of country, the LDS church reflects these ideologies in its doctrine and reenacts them in its own history. In fact, it may be understood to be the “theology of Americanism”, as explained in the section below (Reyes, 1997). This is most clearly seen in its distinctive theologizing of America and

the ways in which its efforts at physical and spiritual expansion mirror those of the nation.

*Democracy in the Age of Jackson.* According to one historian, “the central concern of the Jacksonian generation was the transition from a society based on tradition [strict morality and religious piety] to a society based on an ethic of individualism” (Kohl, 1989, p. 6). The Jacksonian era of American democracy is named for President Andrew Jackson, seen as perhaps the first “man of the people” to be elected to the highest office in the land (Howe, 2007; R. B. Remini, 1989; Watson, 2006). His ascent into the office of the president was seen as the start of a new era for the US—one in which every person could believe in himself and his own unlimited potential. This proud individualism expanded into an intense patriotism (Kohl, 1989). Inspired by recent acquisitions of land west of the Appalachians, Americans saw the potential for expansion from coast to coast, and so began an aggressive plan to conquer and territorialize the Wild West. Consequently, it was also a time that gave new and promising opportunity to the poor of the land. Farmers who were not able to make a living in New England (states like Vermont, where Smith was born, saw particularly bad growing seasons at the start of the century) could move west and settle the frontier with little money and great incentive from the government. With plenty of land to grow on, families were generally large—they were suddenly able to support themselves with all the empty land they farmed, and there was plenty more land to leave to an exponentially increasing posterity (Nugent, 2008). Additionally, this was a time that rugged individualism became a patriotic value (Kohl, 1989; Watson, 2006). The rugged individual could leave his home and

circumstance in the East and clear the way for a new life and new success out West, often armed with nothing but his own fortitude.

In certain areas, this excitement was accompanied by religious revival. In what became known as the “burned-over” district in upstate New York (Cross, 1982), Jacksonian ideals were popular among those whose poor circumstances left them clinging to any shred of hope that came their way (Fleming, 2007). Move west and make a fortune? Be born-again and receive an even greater reward in heaven? The promises seemed too good to be true, and for many, were too appealing to pass up. Although some were reluctant to trust in their own strength and opted to take their chances in the more settled, existing communities, others jumped at any opportunity to realize their own destiny while spreading democracy and Christianity past the borders of what they believed to be civilization.

According to Walter Russel Mead’s definition, “Jacksonianism is less an intellectual or political movement than it is an expression of the social, cultural, and religious values of a large portion of the American public” (2002, pp. 225-226), and the LDS is part of it. In addition to faith in self and faith in God, the Jacksonian era inspired an increased value for respect for hard work, equality (of those who worked hard enough for it), access to financial credit, and courage (Mead, 2002, p. 231). Money was seen as “a means for self-discovery and expression” (2002, p. 234), and banks and paper specie spread exponentially. Honor was a public as well as a personal matter, and an honorable person was willing to kill or be killed for the things he loved and believed in (primarily his own self-interest, his family, and his country) (2002, p. 235).

Jacksonian Americans were also valiantly protective of their communities and made brutal distinctions between insiders and outsiders (Mead, 2002, p. 236; Moore, 1986). These fierce loyalties play into the LDS protection of their own communities, which were often isolated both physically and culturally from their nearest neighbors. Ideologically, Mormons were like other Jacksonians because although they were “instinctively democratic and populist ...[and] believe[d] that the political and moral instincts of the American people are sound and can be trusted,” (Mead, 2002, p. 238), and they were fiercely loyal to their own ideologies and self-interest.

In fact, the practical doctrine of the LDS theologizes what Tocqueville referred to as self interest well understood. Unlike what he calls “religious self-interest”, self-interest well understood is not necessarily tied to other-worldly expectations. Instead, self-interest well understood often seeks for the best opportunities in the here-and-now, and ultimately it does not require complete temporal sacrifice. Instead, it is a system whereby individuals work for the common good—not necessarily because it is morally right—but because it is most beneficial to them. Therefore, individuals can be “self-interested” without being selfish or insensitive to the needs of others. According to Tocqueville, for example, Americans lived as though the best way to care for the local economy was to mind one’s own economy. This was an unromantic but practical ideal which led to much success (Tocqueville, 2002).<sup>43</sup>

This intensely inward focus was problematic, of course, for those whose lifestyles fell outside of the mainstream (Catholics, for example), or who were secretive about them

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<sup>43</sup> According to this description, the nation was operating much like Bernard Mandeville’s “Fable of the Bees” (2009), which portrays hive society as better off when each bee seeks his or her own benefit first. However, while Tocqueville finds self-interest well understood to be a sound economic policy, Mandeville is more cynical of the seemingly converse relationship between morality and success.

(such as the Masons).<sup>44</sup> Outsiders were seen as unacceptable threats to the status quo. These prejudices and others already present in the American population made for a precarious welcome for Mormonism when it arrived on the scene in 1830. However, the radicalism of the early LDS church was not out of place—in fact, it was one of many such radical movements in the first half of the nineteenth century.

*LDS interpretations of American ideologies.* Mormonism has been called “a very American gospel”, “intensely patriotic”, “a religious version of the American Dream” (Ostling & Ostling, 1999, pp. 8, xvi, xix), “a theology of Americanism” (Reyes, 1997), “quintessentially American” (Terryll L. Givens, 2004), and “the American religion” (Bloom, 2006; Yates, 1939)—all because it is so firmly rooted in Jacksonian American ideology.<sup>45,46</sup> According to Harold Bloom, “what matters most about Joseph Smith is how American both the man and his religion have proved to be”, not only because they were intensely patriotic, but also because they relied on similar foundations of faith,

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<sup>44</sup> The Anti-Masonic party was formed in upstate New York in 1828, after a scandal involving the alleged murder of a former mason who had threatened to make public the secrets of the order.

<sup>45</sup> The story is told that Leo Tolstoy, in conversation with Andrew D. White, United States foreign minister to Russia in 1892 said, “I wish you would tell me about your American religion.”

“We have no state church in America,” replied Dr. White.

“I know that, but what about your American religion?”

Dr. White explained to Tolstoy that in America each person is free to belong to the particular church in which he is interested.

Tolstoy impatiently replied: “I know all of this, but I want to know about the *American* religion. . . . The church to which I refer originated in America and is commonly known as the Mormon Church. What can you tell me of the teachings of the Mormons?”

Dr. White said, “I know very little concerning them.”

Then Count Leo Tolstoy rebuked the ambassador. “Dr. White, I am greatly surprised and disappointed that a man of your great learning and position should be so ignorant on this important subject. Their principles teach the people not only of heaven and its attendant glories, but how to live so that their social and economic relations with each other are placed on a sound basis. If the people follow the teachings of this church, nothing can stop their progress—it will be limitless.”

Tolstoy continued, “There have been great movements started in the past but they have died or been modified before they reached maturity. If Mormonism is able to endure, unmodified, until it reaches the third and fourth generation, it is destined to become the greatest power the world has ever known” (Haight, 1980). This conversation is also cited by Bloom (2006, p. 116).

<sup>46</sup> Armand Mauss argues that, by the mid-twentieth century, the LDS ideal family life was no different from that of the ideal American family (Mauss, 1994).

industry, and individualism (2006, p. 129). Despite this rich heritage, Mormon identity “rested on a highly schizophrenic set of relations with the American experience” (Hatch, 1989, p. 26). As mentioned previously, during most of the nineteenth century, the LDS church received ridicule and abuse for their perceived cultural, social, and theological differences. However, some argue that the most obvious peculiarity of the LDS church is that it is more “American” than its neighbors (Gottlieb & Wiley, 1984; Klaus J. Hansen, 1968). According to Durham (1944, p. 136), “The Mormons were American nationalists of a peculiar sort” because of their faithful combination of spiritualism and patriotism. Others have said that Mormonism was “the first American religion” because the religion “was brand new, with a new identity”, like America itself (Hanks & Williams, 2003, pp. 25, 51). Smith himself believed that the fates of the land and his religion were intertwined and that both had a divine purpose.<sup>47</sup> In fact, he “saw his new religion as a total response to all aspects, spiritual and material, of frontier life” (Gottlieb & Wiley, 1984, p. 37).<sup>48</sup>

Although the LDS claim to have always been faithful to US ideals, their relationship with the government and mainstream cultural and political milieus were less constant. White (1978, p. 161) argues that “during [its] initial eight years, Mormonism intensely identified with American culture. American ideals became the foundation of a unique theology and social philosophy.” By encapsulating common American themes

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<sup>47</sup> Bloom affirms this perspective, stating that “[t]here was something in Smith and his vision that remains central to our country and its spirituality” (2006, p. 70).

<sup>48</sup> Similarities between Smith’s cultural experience and the religion he founded are also sources for criticism of Mormonism. White (1978, p. 162) argues that “*The Book of Mormon* clearly reflects the major preoccupations of nineteenth century Americans”. Howe (2007, p. 314) expresses a similar perspective, although he adds that “the dominant themes” of *The Book of Mormon* “are biblical, prophetic, and patriarchal, not democratic or optimistic.” Members of the LDS church today often counter such arguments against *The Book of Mormon*’s authenticity by saying that any correlations between the book and nineteenth-century America are another testament that God had prepared the Book specifically for Smith’s generation (and those that would follow).

(such as individualism and a divinity within) in revelation the LDS church “sacralized and legitimated the utopian nationalism of nineteenth century Americans” (1978, p. 163). However, the Mormon version of utopia soon overreached the imaginations of its neighbors.

As White (1977) sees it, economics was the first real split between LDS and mainstream US culture because the Mormon collectivist ideal was “the very antithesis” of laissez-faire capitalism of America. This split was an early hint of the disconnect between LDS biopolitics with US state and federal systems. With their own systems of enacting religious values in state matters, collecting and relegating capital, and organizing families and communities, “Mormonism confronted society as a rival political, economic, and social system” by the mid-nineteenth century (O. K. White, 1978, p. 161). In fact, such a spread of government scope and authority as the LDS exhibited could be considered as an instance of what Foucault calls “governmentality” (Foucault, 2007a). This split came by way of increasing LDS drive toward self-sufficiency, based on a distrust of the Gentiles which surrounded them. These measures amounted to a socialist economy which is further discussed in Chapter Six. This is how, despite their extremely patriotic theology and firm belief in the sanctity of the US government, the LDS church nonetheless became outsiders in America (Moore, 1986), a position which had profound influence on their later history.

Beginning with nothing but an earnest desire to do what he believed was right, Smith laid the foundations for an empire that would not only embrace (and offend) the Jacksonian vision, but also, in many ways, achieve it (Clark, 1958; Klaus J. Hansen, 1974). Once the church had started to grow and attract members, Smith began to receive

revelations that played upon the already exorbitant patriotism that defined the Jacksonian era. While many Americans of the 19th and early 20th centuries saw their country as a “land of promise” (Croly, 1989)—as the Mormons did—or an “empire of liberty,” as Jefferson called it (qtd. in Nugent, 2008), the LDS took those views and expanded upon them. To them, America was a promised land where Christ had visited the natives shortly after his resurrection. It was also the site of the Garden of Eden and of the future New Jerusalem, where Christ would reign and rule the world during the millennium.<sup>49</sup> This re-positioning of the Holy Land in the New World also meant that the LDS cast themselves as the chosen people—often buffeted and persecuted, but always blessed and prospered by the hand of God (Bloom, 2006; Hacken, 2000, p. 81). Of course, this re-telling of a familiar American myth of promise and exceptionalism only served to make it almost unrecognizable and ironically repugnant to others in the US.

Another very simple way in which the LDS church reflected and magnified the culture of 19th century America is through its belief and practice of manifest destiny (Klaus J. Hansen, 1968, p. 21; O. K. White, 1978, p. 163). While most of the nation was caught up in the idea of forging new frontiers and populating the entire continent, none practiced these beliefs more faithfully than the LDS. Hansen (1968, p. 21) notes that the Mormon religion “was infused with a great deal of spread-eagle American nationalism at a time when Manifest Destiny had become the watchword of the nation.” This is seen in the westward movement of the Church, eventually into what was at the time Mexican territory. This movement was guided by a desire among the LDS for a land of their own, and was largely motivated by their pursuit of the freedom to rule themselves.

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<sup>49</sup> These views are found in LDS scripture, including *The Book of Mormon* and Smith’s *Doctrine and Covenants*.

Church members saw themselves as part of the divine destiny of the US, and they took the ideology of expansion personally, implementing it in their communities and even in their own homes. For example, non-Mormons in early America generally had much larger families than their counterparts in England and Europe. Tocqueville (2002) noted that this might be because so much land needed to be filled, and no scarcity of resources or potential inheritance was present to check growth. It was not unusual for families to have 6, 7, or more children—even with a high rate of infant mortality on the frontier (Nugent, 2008). Perhaps there was a social/cultural basis to this. But the LDS members outdid themselves when they adopted—wholeheartedly—this American ideal. Perhaps because they were intent on populating their own cities and territories, the LDS people had extremely large families, even compared to their contemporaries. Of course, much of this population boom was facilitated by the practice of polygamy, which allowed one man to father as many as 30 or more children (sometimes 60 or more) (Embry, 2006).

The program of expansionism in the LDS church also included a spiritual realm. Because the sect was new and small at first, it relied heavily on proselytizing or missionary work. From the very beginning of the LDS church, soon after *The Book of Mormon* was published, Smith sent members out into the world as missionaries. At first they stayed nearby, making converts in Pennsylvania and the rest of New England (Fleming, 2007; J. Smith, 1978c). Within a few years, they were sent internationally to Canada and England, eventually bringing thousands of converts back to the US, and further weakening the financial stability of the group as a whole (Hatch, 2001; Pillis, 1998). By stretching the borders of its membership, the LDS believed that they were

metaphorically enlarging the stakes of Zion and following the admonition given by Isaiah to “[e]nlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes” (Isaiah 54:2, KJV).<sup>50</sup>

One study suggests that “many, if not most, early Mormons were men and women of modest means and little formal education” (Hill, 1989a, p. 16), and another similarly claims that Mormon converts were “characteristically poor, uprooted, unschooled, and unsophisticated...” and had “virtually no stake in society” (Hatch, 2001, p. 76). Like Smith, his followers warmly embraced the theologizing of the Jacksonian mythos that together gave them hope for a better life in this world and in the next (thanks to the promise of Zion and eventual political domination—a theme which is further explored in Chapter Six). It was easy for many of them to relate to the LDS doctrines which sacralized American soil. To believers, this was a promised land, a new Canaan for their own inheritance. Much like the Israelites in the Hebrew Bible were justified by God in their less-than-hospitable behavior toward the people who were already living in the land they claimed as theirs, the LDS felt a sense of entitlement that was at once both religious and political in origin. This attitude, of course, led to troubled relationships with non-LDS, who were referred to as “Gentiles” by the LDS—meaning that they were not God’s chosen people. The Jacksonian politics of individualism are also spiritualized by the LDS people. According to one nineteenth-century observer, “Mormonism exalts the

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<sup>50</sup> This is only one of many instances of how the LDS re-enact the history of the Hebraic religious tradition. According to Bloom, “near identification with the ancient Hebrews” was typical of Americans of Smith’s generation who “had drowned in the Bible” (2006, p. 78).

individual as no other religion does” (Geddes, 1924, p. 56), and so re-interprets and intensifies the social mores of its milieu.<sup>51</sup>

While the LDS theology and practice was firmly rooted in a political and religious belief in expansionism, through Smith’s revelation it quickly morphed into its own version of these ideas, distinct from the political ideology and religious revivalism that gave rise to it. Eventually, the intensely religious sentiment toward America and the desire to populate and cultivate a specific portion of land became strange and even a bit repulsive to American sentiment, causing a biopolitical conflict of sorts. While the LDS faith remained constant in its zeal for the divine destiny of the church and the special, sacred role the US would play in the religious history of the world, the changing world-view of the rest of America soon moved far enough in the opposite direction to make the connections between the two perspectives almost unrecognizable.

According to Lawrence Moore (1986), the Mormon’s position as outsiders was actually beneficial for their faith. He says, “If sustained controversy denotes cultural importance, then Mormons were as significant as any other religious group in nineteenth-century America...They aroused opposition precisely because they were so profoundly part of the American scene.” (Moore, 1986, p. xii). By their own account, the LDS thrived on their differences and took pride in them. Once safe in their mountain refuge (Utah territory), Brigham Young Jr. proudly proclaimed, “There is something about this people that is truly peculiar” (B. Young, Jr. , 1867). This statement inspired a nickname that would follow the LDS for generations, and came to have intense religious

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<sup>51</sup> The LDS church exalts the individual by making it possible for a poor farm boy to become a revered prophet, for every person to be entitled to revelation through the Holy Spirit, and—most controversially—in their belief in the ability of man to become like God. This final doctrinal point is often misunderstood, but the LDS believe that as sons and daughters of God, they are inherently like Him.

significance. In 1881, a member of the highest council of the church explained the importance of this peculiarity, saying, “God is building up a peculiar people, a people of faith, a people who will do that which he requires of them, although what he may require of us may be directly opposed to our traditions” (Cannon, 1881). The peculiarity of the LDS people was how they opposed and embraced Jacksonian traditions as they effectively sacralized the American experience, as well as in their often biopolitical practices. Their acceptance of the title is also indicative of an affirmation of their own “chosenness”, much like Eddy’s. The LDS believe that they are God’s chosen people, and God’s people are not like people of the world. This abnormality is one which they seek intently and embrace whole-heartedly.

#### *American Religions, Zionist Hopes*

The CS and LDS churches stand out in history not only as quintessentially American religions, but also as distinctly American extra-statal movements in their own right. Both groups reflect the political ideologies and cultural norms from which they were born and magnify them to the point that they became reprehensible to the mainstream. Upon careful consideration, these references to American culture and politics in the religious doctrine of the CS and LDS achieve two things. First, they sacralized the American experience, added piety to patriotism, and make the American experience spiritually significant. This is perhaps best expressed in the CS adoption/adaptation of transcendental ideology and the strength of their distinctive ethos of the progress of science and spirituality combined. In the LDS church, love of God and country is a single emotion, the belief in the US as a promised land is theologized, and manifest destiny is divinely sanctioned. Through these and numerous other ways, the CS

and LDS churches embrace singularly spiritual views of American culture, which make them the enemies of the political and cultural mainstream while at the same time they welcome outsiders and misfits into their ranks.

On the other hand, CS and LDS encounters with American culture and politics offer challenges to the US government. In the case of the CS, battles between church and state were fought over the disputed territory of medical care and its effects on the individual body. These conflicts have led to intense litigation, and lasting effects include a great deal of red-tape that Christian Scientists still need to navigate (including requirements for health insurance, immunizations, and so on). For the LDS, battles between church and state often had geopolitical grounding in the LDS desire to fully govern itself. This desire was rooted in the same biopolitical doctrines which sacralized the land, and, in this case, justified a spiritual and physical separation from the US.

#### *A Geographical Location for a Spiritual Zion*

Part of what the LDS believed to be their responsibility was a need to restore lost truths to the earth which included establishing Zion—a city to which Christ would return in the latter days. Therefore, for the LDS, Zion is not merely a metaphysical destination or state-of-being as it is for the CS; rather, it has a physical geography and must actually be built, populated, and defended. Joseph Smith spoke on behalf of the faith he founded when he said, “We believe ...that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory” (A of F 10). Historically, the Mormons fought to locate their Zion within (and even outside of) the borders of the United States, and were met with resistance both from their surrounding secular

communities and the government. They believed their Zion would bring a respite that could not be found elsewhere. During their trek across 1,000 miles of American wilderness, the Mormon pioneers comforted themselves with singing:

We'll find the place which God for us prepared,

Far away, in the West,

Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid;

There the Saints will be blessed.

We'll make the air with music ring, shout praises to our God and King;

Above the rest these words we'll tell—All is well! All is well! (Clayton, 1998)

For members of the LDS church in the nineteenth century, Zion was not only a millenarian dream. It was also achievable in the here-and-now and the responsibility for its founding rested on the church. Although they believed that Christ would come and rule the world for 1,000 years of peace and harmony, Mormons also saw Zion as attainable *prior to* his coming. They understood that achieving Zion would require sacrifice, obedience, righteousness, and determination in the face of opposition. The struggles of the early Mormons were physical as well as spiritual, just as they believed their reward would be. These efforts are outlined in the paragraphs below and treated with more detail in later chapters.

Today, although LDS doctrines no longer strongly conflict US social and political norms, the group has not given up its collective quest for building a literal, geographically-situated heaven-on-earth. Current efforts of “building the kingdom” (as they call it) are perhaps manifest most publicly in efforts such as missions of

proselytizing and building temples. But some LDS efforts to achieve a political-religious utopia retain a sense of the same political urgency that shaped their preliminary efforts. For example, in 2008, the LDS gained ground for their interpretation of the City of God when they helped to pass Proposition 8 in California, defining marriage in state law as being between a man and a woman. In fact, the Church asked that all members in California who were registered to vote make phone calls in support of Proposition 8 (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2008a). As an added measure, church leaders in Salt Lake City put together a special broadcast for church members in California, explaining the church stance on marriage and relating it to the political matter at hand (S. Taylor, 2008). Church funds were used to “cover the travel expenses of several Utah-based church leaders who went to California” a week before the vote (Associated Press, 2008a). The LDS church has also worked with faith-based coalitions in Arizona and Florida to support traditional marriage in those states (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2008b). Their commitment of money, man-power, and media efforts were later reproached by opponents of the proposition (Riccardi, 2008). These actions suggest that a remnant of early-LDS biopolitical theology continues to govern the lives and spirituality of its people.

This is not the only recent instance of LDS theology mingling with political authority. In late 2007, transcripts of private religious meetings held between an LDS governor, his staff, and others, were made public on the ground that they “involved state business” (E. White, 2007). Mike Leavitt, former governor of the state of Utah, was accused in the press of mixing the authority of the Mormon church, which claims membership from 61 percent of Utahans, with his secular political strategies (Gehrke,

2007). Although one staff member, also a member of LDS church, defended Leavitt, saying “We certainly weren’t attempting to establish public policy or state policy based on those meetings or discussions there,” according to the Associated Press, the meetings were meant to give insight “into what LDS scripture defines as the proper role of government” and allow government officials to “discuss how they could be communicated in a ‘bilingual’ manner to a secular audience” (“Ex-governor explored how to apply Mormon ideas to Utah policy”, 2007). By mixing the authority of church and state in a place where the people were overwhelmingly of one religion, Leavitt’s actions reminded some of a Brigham-Young style theocracy (Gehrke, 2007). Historically, such efforts estranged Utah from the US government and divided loyalties among faithful members who feared government encroachment into what they believed to be their private, religious affairs.<sup>52</sup>

Similar breaches of church/state authority have arisen at other times in other states; however, the LDS example offers a limit case of what they determine to be an ultimately divine mandate to govern both the spirit and the law. In 1846, after Smith was killed by a mob in Illinois, the LDS people, led by Young, embarked on a great exodus to the West. The LDS departure from Illinois, which was a key state in the Union, came at a time when the US was gearing up for a war with Mexico. In fact, the US claim apart from treaty rights to much of the land west of the Mississippi was still precarious at best, especially because few US citizens were living beyond that border (Nugent, 2008). The

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<sup>52</sup> Such conflicts continue to exist in the heart and minds of members of the LDS church. Mormons today vote overwhelmingly Republican (Campbell & Monson, 2003) because of their position on social issues regarding the family, but their theology espouses a communitarian system of welfare that—taken at face values—appears to be intensely Democratic. A recent study shows that LDS members are likely to vote as their leaders do on important social issues (Campbell & Monson, 2003). However, economic issues are often considered to be a private rather than a public issue, and so are not often pressed by Church officials. Still, for members who do not agree with the majority in social or economic ideology may feel a tension between themselves and the mainstream LDS political culture.

departure of the LDS on bad terms could have meant trouble for the US (and in some ways that will be later explained, did cause much trouble). The LDS were not ignorant of the political implications of their move. In fact, other formulations of the plan of their great migration included retreat into the Republic of Texas or making peace with Great Britain and settling in Oregon (Wicks & Foister, 2005). Ultimately deciding that they must stand alone, they left the US purposefully, fully intent on creating their own nation (called “Deseret”) within the safety of ill-defined territories in the Rocky Mountains.<sup>53</sup>

Were the LDS capable of actually building and sustaining their own political government separate from that of the US? At that point in history—between 1846 and approximately 1875<sup>54</sup>—it appears that they were. During the first decades after LDS removal to Utah, church president Brigham Young enacted a unique form of religio-secular government which will be more fully described in later sections. The LDS were already in the habit of governing themselves. In Nauvoo in the early 1840s, Smith had been town counselor, mayor, lieutenant governor of the Nauvoo Legion, and president of the church (Flanders, 1965). The LDS membership had become adept at managing their own political affairs and seeing to their own interests. In part because they believed that the US government had entirely forsaken them, the LDS placed full responsibility for their welfare upon their own shoulders and trained themselves to live up to that sacred obligation (Garr, 2002). Unable to fully trust outsiders, they converted lawyers and other politicians to their cause. These and other actions in Nauvoo demonstrate that the LDS

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<sup>53</sup> Shortly after the arrival of the LDS in the Salt Lake Valley, the area became part of Utah territory, putting them once again under the jurisdiction of the US government.

<sup>54</sup> In 1846, two years after the death of Smith, the church was reorganized and, under the leadership of Brigham Young, began to prepare to move west where it enjoyed the freedom and distance it needed to govern its own political affairs. 1875 is a more arbitrary date. After this time, the US stranglehold on the LDS began to take its toll, and LDS leaders were forced into hiding. This, of course, was also after the transcontinental railroad was completed at Promontory Point, Utah, bringing more non-LDS into the area.

had a mind to assert their own sovereignty long before they had a land they could call their own.

Furthermore, some would argue that the LDS church today still governs itself as a state within a state (Ostling & Ostling, 1999; Quinn, 1994). The LDS church has its own sustainable system of governance, including welfare for its poor, economic and political interests (Church Educational System, 2003; R. E. Nelson, 1993). While LDS members today officially pledge: “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law,”<sup>55</sup> it is clear that loyalty is expected to be given primarily to the church (A of F 12). Additionally, it appears that if the leader of the LDS today were to officially sanction a return to the political self-government of the Church, the pieces are in place to facilitate that aim at some operable level (Campbell & Monson, 2003). Ultimately, the LDS have not forsaken their hope for Zion, and in their private industry and public politics, they work to keep that hope alive.

The LDS ideal of Zion is a political and spiritual government, one with seemingly communitarian ideologies (Church Educational System, 2003; Geddes, 1924). The LDS scripture that defines Zion for them puts it this way: “And the Lord called his people Zion because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them” (Moses 7:18). A revelation given to Smith states that “it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin” (D&C 49:20). A popular hymn calls Zion “City of our God” (George Gill, 1998). These descriptions sound more like Winthrop’s (1971) city on a hill, and less like the highly-organized system that governs LDS social, personal, and political life today.

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<sup>55</sup> This belief is commonly used as justification for why the practice of polygamy is not sanctioned by the LDS church today.

But to the LDS, the kind of equality they idealize is best met through carefully calculated structure. For example, the church has its own systems of taxing (a tithing of 10% required of members) and welfare (providing food, clothing, and financial aid to those in need). It also holds real estate and employs a complex and capable bureaucracy to manage church interests in temporal affairs. This includes many material assets, such as church farms, dairies, and processing plants, located across the nation, funded by church monies and staffed by church employees and missionaries who volunteer their time to support them (Terryl L. Givens, 2007; Ostling & Ostling, 1999; Prince & Wright, 2005).<sup>56</sup> Additionally, LDS church members serve missions, acting as ambassadors of their religion (and biopolitical practices) to foreign countries. Often, they take an active role in building and maintaining working relations with other nations (Hall, 2000). In many instances, the LDS church continues to work as its own insular government within the confines of the US constitutional system. It cares for the needs of its people and urges them to be self-reliant, dependent on the church and its systems, if anything.

*God's City, Man's Government*

For both the CS and the LDS, the quest for heaven within the borders of the United States raises political concerns for the US government, although neither group is directly combative with various state governments or the federal system of government. In principle, both the Christian Scientists and the LDS recognize the sovereignty of the US. For example, in reaction to its edicts, Christian Science changed its standards and certification for health care practitioners and the LDS revoked the practice of polygamy. Still, in the pursuit of their other-worldly goals, contemporary members of both groups often act on their own authority in ways that threaten the perceived legitimacy of the law.

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<sup>56</sup> The LDS Church welfare system will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

By practicing their own forms of politico-spiritual government within the existing state and federal systems, these religions create shadow lands or hidden sites of resistance within the US where citizens primarily answer to a higher law, and become veritable extra- or even contra-states-within-a-state.

The result is a modern-day tale of two cities: just as Augustine explained more than a millennium ago, the City of God and the City of Man continue to do battle not only in the hearts, but also in the lived reality of American citizens. What is more, this conflict is only intensified by the tactical use of biological methods of governance (which will be more fully described in the chapters which follow). In the case of the CS and the LDS, the inhabitants of the City of Man can be further divided, often on biopolitical grounds: what kind of man (or woman) makes the laws? The man/woman in question is either LDS or gentile, CS or non-CS, and this position influences his political, economic and social activity.<sup>57</sup> It is a conflict which plays out in communities, homes, and in the hearts, minds, and bodies of individuals. On the one hand, the City of God offers the hope of perfection, freedom from suffering of all kinds, and a righteous happiness. Conversely, the City of Man offers as distraction the seemingly more immediate needs of economy, safety, and bodily care and function.

Faithful members of the Christian Science and LDS churches choose to live in the City of God to varying degrees, and with varying consequences for the City of Man which remains as a supportive/destructive superstructure around them. Specifically, the Christian Scientist chooses to live *mentally* in the City of God, seeing the material City of

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<sup>57</sup> “Gentile” is the term used by some members of the LDS church to refer to those who are not members. It stems from the LDS belief that they are the God’s chosen children, like the Israelites. Therefore, in biblical fashion, those who are not of the “chosen” group are called gentiles. Additionally, Mormons are expected to marry within their faith, keeping themselves separate from gentile lines (this is also in accordance with Hebraic law).

Man as an “illusion” or “error” (S&H 461: 16). Members of the LDS church take a decidedly different approach to the two-city problem: refusing to choose one over the other, they opt to combine the two, incorporating the essential, physical aspects of the City of Man into God’s City. This is perhaps a prefigurative compromise which underlies the biopolitical preoccupations of both theologies, and is particularly evident in the LDS belief that the temporal *is* spiritual.<sup>58</sup>

When religious groups such as the CS and the LDS choose to either ignore or to incorporate the City of Man, with its own governments, laws, and political economy, they are acting politically. Often, disassociation from, or co-opting what is generally considered to be the realm of government, causes its own political strife, as members of religious bodies work to re-draw the sketchy line between their own territory and the government’s. Sometimes, this conflict results in what may appear to be an *imperio in imperium*, or a state existent within a state. This is certainly the case with off-shoot branches of the Mormon Church, for example, like the FLDS who live on communes and disregard state and federal laws on bigamy, polygamy, and underage marriage.<sup>59</sup> As noted in the introduction, this fundamentalist off-shoot of the LDS church has recently attracted headlines for its questionable biopolitics/bioethics—including the treatment of girls and women as the exclusive property of a group of patriarchs who make decisions for the entire community. Charges of child-rape and illegal marriages (sometimes within families) are also common (“FLDS Leader Decries ‘Terrorist Acts’ in Letter to Bush,”

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<sup>58</sup> In LDS scripture, God says “Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal...” (D&C 29:34). The understanding is that although God does give laws that seem temporal, their purpose is ultimately spiritual. Therefore, commandments regarding marriage, diet, economy, etc. are actually spiritual laws.

<sup>59</sup> The case of the Yearning for Zion ranch in San Angelo, Texas in the spring of 2008 is the most recent example of the way that such off-shoots relate (or do not relate) to the US government (Kovach & Murr, 2008).

2008; Naler, 2008). From time to time, such concerns erupt into suspicions of widespread child-endangerment in FLDS compounds, instigating standoffs of direct hostilities between the US government and the private religious affairs of an insular community ("FLDS Leader Decries 'Terrorist Acts' in Letter to Bush," 2008).

However, territorial disputes between the two cities are not limited to such extreme cases. The lived experience of individuals, families, and congregations also constitute varied degrees of primary allegiance to one city or the other. While one may choose to live in the City of God without offending or disrupting the City of Man, the types of choices generally made by the CS and the LDS represent direct affronts to the legitimacy and security of the secular city.

## Chapter Four

### **The Biopolitics of the CS and LDS**

Perhaps the most obvious point of conflict between the CS and LDS religions and the US government involves the physical bodies of their respective memberships. Ironically, perhaps, both religions theologize and even sacralize the bodies of their constituents: in the CS, as the health of the physical is a window to the spiritual; in the LDS, as the physical necessities of life—food, money, family—become priorities for the church. Because the security of the population is a primary concern of the secular government, it is not surprising that an overlapping interest in the bodies of citizens, scientists, and saints would cause tension, especially when religious ideals run contrary to mainstream American social values or law.

Although other religious doctrines also aim to discipline bodily behavior (demanding abstinence, for example), the lived practice of Christian Science and Mormonism effectively make the care of the individual body a tenet of faith. This faith-in/of-the-body is manifest in church policy and theology regarding gender, sexuality, the nature of the body (whether divine or fallen) and how it ought to be cared for. When these seemingly physical ideologies are implemented in practice, the result is a religious people who have an elevated perception of the spiritual significance of their own bodies and peculiar notions of what those bodies are for and what they ought to do.<sup>60</sup> Not surprisingly, then, much of the controversy (social and political) surrounding the CS and LDS has to do with their uniquely spiritual interpretations and uses of the body.

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<sup>60</sup> Christian Scientists might protest against such an assertion and insist that the body is either illusory or of only passing importance. However, the CS treatment of the body as a physical presence (whether real or not) exemplifies a spiritual dedication to the health of the body, and the movement itself was inspired by its founder's own bodily concerns, as previously explained.

In what ways do these spiritual reinterpretations of decidedly physical concerns discipline the lived realities of individual members of both faiths? Perhaps the CS and LDS faithful can be analyzed as *products* of their faith—their behaviors and attitudes about their bodies produced by the specific systems of belief to which they subscribe. The following sections detail precisely what kinds of markers that spiritual care might leave on the bodies of scientists and saints, and offer a Foucaultian analysis of the political nature of this specific type of productive power.

*Foucault's Theory of Biopolitics*

Because the religious governors of the CS and LDS are already intimately concerned with the “fine points and details” of their individual church members—including their choices of food, health care, and sex—their power is always already biopolitical in nature. According to Dean (1999, p. 99)

Bio-politics is a politics concerning the administration of life ... It is concerned with matters of life and death, with birth and propagation, with health and illness, both physical and mental, and with the processes that sustain or retard the optimization of the life of a population.

Therefore, biopower is also concerned with “the social, cultural, environmental, economic and geographic conditions under which humans live, procreate, become ill, maintain health or become healthy, and die” (1999, p. 99). Because of its fascination with the physical reality of everyday, biopower must concern itself with “the family, with housing, living and working conditions, with what we call ‘lifestyle’, with public health issues, patterns of migration, levels of economic growth and the standards of living”

(1999, p. 99). Primarily, then, biopolitics focuses itself on “the bio-sphere in which humans dwell” (1999, p. 99).

As previously mentioned, Foucault believes political power has always seen the body as its subject (Foucault, 1990). With the rise of liberalism in the west beginning in the eighteenth century, the political nature of the individual body (and the body as population) became a central concern of the government of the state. In fact, Foucault defines biopolitics as springing from this period as an attempt “to rationalize the problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population: health, hygiene, birthrate, life expectancy, race...” (2008, p. 317). According to him, the issues raised by biopolitics became increasingly important in the nineteenth century (during the Jacksonian Era), and still inform politics as they function in the government of the state today (2008, p. 317). In this sense, the body made itself a political entity in its own right at precisely the same time that it insisted on the existence of its own rights. In the US especially, the body that could not be denied life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness without due process brought with it a new standard for the political workings of government as it considered its population—not only as a measure of security or economy, but as a good in and of itself. The body, then, becomes a locus of power simply because it begins to be respected as one.

Biopolitical power is also a regulatory tool. It is “focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes of propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary” (Foucault, 1990, p. 139). In other words, biopolitical government is “the administration of bodies and the

calculated management of life” (1990, p. 140). It is a “micro power”—one that preoccupies itself with governing the details (1990, p. 145). Its force is intensely concentrated on the body of the individual. The ways in which religious belief, practices, and administration politicize the body has specific implications for the individual, the family, and the security and prosperity of the state.

Perhaps the effects of biopolitical power are most clearly seen in the family, which is central to both CS and LDS theology and practice (as will be more fully described later in this chapter). Often, religious practices or guidelines dictate how the family ought to be formed and administered. For example, one might ask: Who is the leader of the household? In the Hebrew Bible, the answer is clear: the patriarch. This single ideology has implications for the way that the family functions in everyday life, and what is accepted as a “normal” family life. Another form of family life supported by the patriarchy of the Hebrew Bible is polygamy. The history of polygamy in the US raises difficult questions concerning the role of the government of state or religion in the government of the family. As the main site for producing and reproducing bodies (citizens, potential economic contributors, soldiers, and the like), the administration of the family is an important foothold for the self-interested state. When the family—including its production of bodies and the bodies it produces—is governed by different motivations through competing allegiances, the political consequences become increasingly significant. This is the case in Christian Science, for example, where parents are often caught between the prospect of either facing prosecution for denying medical care for their children or else denying the power of religious healing that is a mainspring of their faith (not to say anything of the emotions involved in these types of decisions).

Such choices are personal in their effect on the family and its individual members, but also political in their implications for a liberal state that is increasingly interested in the treatment of the body.

The interest of the state in the health and reproduction of its citizenry is deeply rooted in even the most self-interested regimes. According to Foucault (2007b), territory and population together help to ensure the (perceived) security of a state. The bodies of individuals must be trained to be productive members of society, contributors to the economy, purveyors of morality and ethics, and other matters. Furthermore, they ought to be governed so as to ensure their own health and vitality. This is where statistics come to play in the management of the bodies of populations as a whole (Poovey, 1998). The details of an individual's personal choices regarding food and healthcare, for example, are among those that may be dictated by religion and of interest to the state.

While biopolitical power is often disciplinary in nature, it is also productive. In the religious world, power over the body, the power to discipline one's self, is understood to be ultimately liberating rather than punitive. This perspective is precisely the source of its strength. Because individuals believe that they are actually freeing themselves through their discipline, they are often eager to do it.<sup>61</sup> The discipline of the body can take a wide range of forms, including the deprivation of physical appetites and the direction of family life. A biopolitical approach to governance, then, takes the physical body and its productive potential as its subject.

*Biopolitics in the CS and LDS.* Biopolitical power is clearly at work in both the CS and LDS governance in preparation for, or as perceived participation in the City of

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<sup>61</sup> For example, Saba Mahmood (2005) writes of the liberating potential of the self-governing religious practice of Muslim women in this way.

God. In the case of the CS, affiliation with the biopolitical is almost ironic because the religion itself emphasizes the limited significance of the physical body and the temporal world which surrounds it. However, biopolitical debates are at the root of the church-state conflicts involving the CS. Additionally, converts to the faith are often motivated by physical demonstrations of spiritual truths as manifest in bodily healings. Despite a theology that may claim otherwise, the body is absolutely essential to the practice of Christian Science. According to Eddy, the “Scientific Statement of Being” is that

There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual. (S&H 468: 9)

Church members today hear this statement repeated at weekly meetings. For them, the belief that man is spiritual and not material means that spiritual discipline and practice can help one to overcome the seeming problems of the flesh, such as sickness, pain, and even death. Like Christ himself, they will be able to sleep through the storms that surround them, and calmly command the most terrifying storms to “be still” (Mark 4:39).

The mortal body, then, is associated with sin, error, and “mortal mind”.

According to Eddy, both systems are one, and “[n]either exists without the other” (S&H 177:9). Ultimately, both also have the same fate, and “must be destroyed by immortal Mind.” The body itself cannot be spiritual because “from first to last, [it] is a sensuous, human concept” (S&H 177:12). Spirituality and mental clarity allow a faithful Christian Scientist to overcome the erroneous belief in mortality and the temporal challenges it

would bring along with it. The achievement of such an outlook (which represents Zion itself to the Christian Scientist) is no small feat, and often takes place only in glimpses and momentary insights because it requires a great deal of self-discipline on the part of the individual. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the practice of Christian Science demands that one be prepared to instigate a conflict between one's own body and mind—with the determination that only the spirit can be victorious.

Members of the LDS, like other religious persons, also feel the struggle between what they consider to be the spiritual and the “natural” man (who, by definition, is “an enemy to God”) (Mosiah 3:19). The natural man is prideful and does not put enough trust in God. But those who seek the heavenly City in the temporal here-and-now also believe that the body and all matter are inherently intertwined with the spiritual reality. In a statement almost completely opposite to Eddy's Scientific Statement of Being, LDS scripture reports that “There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; We cannot see it, but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter” (D&C 131: 7-8). Just like the Christian Scientist believes that God is Spirit, and that, because man is in the likeness of God man also is a fundamentally spiritual being, members of the LDS church believe that “[t]he Father [God] has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son [Christ] also” (D&C 130:22).

The LDS preoccupation with the material nature of spirit developed into particular doctrines which characterize the practical (and political) nature of this belief and emphasize its unique biopolitics. For example, members of the LDS church are expected to live by a strict “word of wisdom”, forbidding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and

“hot drinks.”<sup>62</sup> <sup>63</sup> The blessings promised to those who adhere to these standards are spiritual, mental, and physical. According to Smith, the Lord intends that

all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. (D&C 89:18-21)

In the physical/spiritual/political Zion of the LDS, the integration of temporal and spiritual is seamless, and both characteristics are seen to be inseparable. Therefore, the spiritual authority of the LDS leader also amounts to authority over the seemingly private, biological spaces of family living.

Perhaps the best example of this spiritual authority over temporal matters is demonstrated as Smith’s authority eventually spread from the pulpit to the bedroom when the practice of polygamy was officially sanctioned in 1843<sup>64</sup>. As leader of the church, Smith had authority to command a man to take a second wife—one that Smith had chosen for him (Brodie, 1995; Bushman, 2005; Corcoran, 1994). This, of course, was a controversial doctrine, even among the most faithful believers, and eventually proved to

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<sup>62</sup> While the Word of Wisdom was contained in an 1833 revelation to Smith, it was not fully enforced until 1901, when it became a formal position of the LDS church (Bushman, 1993).

<sup>63</sup> The exact wording of the doctrine proscribes against the use of “strong drinks” (officially interpreted as alcohol) and “hot drinks” (officially interpreted as coffee and tea). In the past century, these guidelines have been reinterpreted and expanded upon in LDS culture (although official doctrine still holds to the original, simple interpretations). For example, Mormon avoidance of caffeine is linked to the scriptural exclusion of “hot drinks”, although adherence to this stricter law is varied and its justification contested (Stratton, 1990).

<sup>64</sup> Although reports suggest that Smith received revelation on polygamy and practiced it as early as 1831. (Brodie, 1995; Bushman, 2005)

be a foothold for the US government’s campaigns against Mormonism (and other “Gentile” conflicts with the LDS) (Lyman, 1986; Yancey, 2002)—including the so-called “Utah War” in 1857-58.<sup>65</sup> Although the LDS church officially stopped sanctioning the practice of polygamy in 1890 as a condition for its statehood (another compromise between the two Cities), the doctrine itself has never been repealed. In fact, members believe that polygamous relationships continue in the afterlife, and the general understanding is that the “celestial law”, as it is sometimes called, was an essential part of “the restoration of all things”—or the process through which the entirety of primitive Christianity (including its Old Testament predecessors) must be reclaimed.

Clearly, the biological issues that concern the CS and LDS churches are of interest to the US government, which has a responsibility to ensure the health and proper regeneration of its population. Social mores conflict with spiritual ideals in both instances to make for questionable politics and precarious relationships between the governments of the two Cities. When the bodies of citizens, as well as their spirits, are at stake, the state government also has a stake in Zion.

#### *An LDS Example of the Doctrinally Disciplined Body*

In 1995, the President of the LDS church gave the following counsel, establishing the ground-rules for the form and function of divinely sanctioned families and establishing a contemporary foundation for their biopolitics:

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<sup>65</sup> Also known as “Buchanan’s Blunder”, the Utah War was the desperate attempt of the US government to regain a portion of control over overwhelmingly Mormon Utah Territory. Although there were no battles, the rampant fear led to the tragedy known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre, in which innocent pioneers were killed by a group of Mormons who were wary of any outsiders. This period will be more fully discussed in Chapter Six.

We ... solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman<sup>66</sup> is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children. ... Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.... We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. ... We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

(Hinckley, et al., 1995)

The document ends with a call for "responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society" (paragraph 7). Through this single proclamation, the LDS church clarifies its perspective of no less than five key secular/political issues, each of which works on the body to produce a new kind of saintly citizen.

First, the document addresses the Church stance on gay marriage. "[M]arriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God" and is central to the Creator's plan for His children. Deviations from this divinely-appointed norm are not part of God's plan and therefore are unsanctioned. This phrase is used by church members to support their zero-tolerance rule for gay marriage (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

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<sup>66</sup> As this document makes clear, the LDS no longer sanction the practice of polygamy, or the marriage of a man to more than one woman. This doctrinal difference was one reason that the fundamentalist sect known as the FLDS broke from the main LDS church in the early twentieth-century, soon after the LDS church officially stopped practicing polygamy. Arguing that the main LDS church had lost touch with revelation and had lost sight of Smith's founding doctrines, the FLDS withdrew from society (much as the early LDS had done) and, under the guidance of their own prophet, live communally under the heavy hand of patriarchy (Krakauer, 2003).

2008b), an argument which was played out in November 2008, most notably over California's Proposition 8, which would allow for same-sex marriage in the state. Because the words of the Church President are viewed by members as revelation, this is an unarguable position which faithful church members must accept.<sup>67</sup>

Second, the Proclamation states that “gender is an essential characteristic”—meaning that one's gender is not only an attribute of mortality, but is part of his or her eternal spiritual identity and nature. This statement may be interpreted as saying that men and women are equal in spiritual measure (as is clarified later in this chapter). Members of the LDS church believe that there are essential traits which distinguish masculine and feminine personalities, and that men and women have different responsibilities in the family, community, and Church. Specifically, “[b]y divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children” (Hinckley, et al., 1995 paragraph 7). However, the document also states that “fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners” (paragraph 7).

The third and fourth points made involve the literal creation and procreation of the human family; namely, that the call to “multiply and replenish” is still a commandment in force, and that sex is prohibited outside of marriage. Because of these guidelines, Mormon families are likely to be larger than the American average.<sup>68</sup>

Additionally, members of the LDS church are also less likely to engage in premarital

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<sup>67</sup> While homosexuals are not banned from LDS membership, they must live by the same expectation of sexual behavior, including chastity before (heterosexual) marriage. Therefore, in order to participate in Mormon rites and ceremonies, they must not act on their homosexual desires.

<sup>68</sup> Although this is not always the case, and members of the Church hierarchy often have 3 or fewer children (Mauss, 1994).

sexual activity, including co-habitation. One recent study shows that only 8 percent of LDS adults had lived with a member of the opposite sex prior to marriage, compared to 23 percent of Catholics, 32 percent of Jews, 20 percent of conservative Protestants, and 45 percent of those with no religious affiliation (Holman & Harding, 1996). Not only are Mormon attitudes shaped by their belief, but their conduct and (re)production are as well.

Finally, this statement from LDS church officials takes a strong stance against abortion. Church members “affirm the sanctity of life” and “call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere” to uphold this and other standards. To members of the LDS church, abortion is similar to murder, and as a spiritual offense is handled in much the same way. Those who have had an abortion are disciplined by the church and not allowed to take part in its most sacred sacraments until the proper penance has been paid (Kimball, 1993). It is a serious sin with serious spiritual consequences.

The effect of all of these rules and regulations regarding the production and reproductions of families and individuals, citizens and saints is ultimately the formation and function of a new system of governing private and political life. Productive power creates new thoughts, actions, and systems of belief as it works on the bodies of individuals. Eventually these forces create patterns of everyday living which effectively form a new type of citizen—saint or scientist—different from those who live fully within the secular, temporal realm.<sup>69</sup> Through their use of productive power as part of a strategy

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<sup>69</sup> This is especially clear in the case of the FLDS, who continue to create saints who are “peculiar”. Their isolationism and strict practices of patriarchy (including polygamy—despite state and federal laws against it), make them outlaws within their own nation (Singular, 2008). However, the FLDS appear to have a delicate relationship with the US government because, more often than not, they are left to themselves (Krakauer, 2003). Their conclaves are indicators of their continued pursuit for a physical, geographical Zion, and their dedication to being “in the world but not of the world”.

of governance, both the CS and LDS effectively mark themselves on the flesh of their memberships, shaping their lived realities.

### *The Gendered Religious Body*

Judeo-Christian culture seems to support two different, and perhaps opposing, views of the roles of men and women in God's eyes. In the first book of the Hebrew Bible, Moses re-tells the creation story and takes particular care to note that sexual difference was divinely appointed. Explaining the creation of Adam and Eve, he says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27). In later books the Hebrew Bible continues to expand upon the different spiritual and practical roles of men and women. Although there were prophetesses, women were also often treated as chattel, traded to men in marriage and used for their own gain. The patriarchs ruled as the primary head of the household, and often took a number of wives.<sup>70</sup>

The New Testament offers a somewhat different view of marriage relations. In fact, one of the overarching metaphors of Christianity is that Christ is the bridegroom to his people, and that one ought to love Christ as one loves a spouse. Clarifying this view, Paul wrote, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Ephesians 5:25).<sup>71</sup> Additionally, Paul claims that sexual bias does not inhibit the atonement, saying, "[t]here is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor

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<sup>70</sup> This tradition of complicated sexual politics within the family dates back to Abraham, who was promised a large posterity by God, but who had married a barren wife. In his old age, Abraham took Hagar, his wife's handmaid, and had a child with her. Later, his own barren wife was miraculously blessed with a child, whom they named Isaac. Isaac later used his own wife, Rebekah, to deceive king Abimelech. However, it was because of Rebekah's own cunning that her favorite son, Jacob, received the birthright that Isaac had intended to bestow upon Esau. Jacob himself had four wives (one of whom he loved) and fathered twelve children who would become the tribes of Israel.

<sup>71</sup> Of course, this view is complicated by expectations for wives to respect their husbands and obey them. See Ephesians 5:33.

free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). In fact, for some, the Christian ideal after the resurrection appears to lean toward androgyny—because “in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven” (Matthew 22:30). If the angels in heaven are not married, then perhaps the differences of gender and seemingly essential roles of men and women are not that important after all.

Various interpretations and intertwinings of these two main perspectives have shaped the Judeo-Christian tradition throughout history. However, in the US, where religious freedom prompted liberal interpretation, these standards were tried and tested to the extreme. Christian Science exemplifies a modern resurrection of the divine feminine in both its practical administration and theology by placing a woman at its head and recognizing the motherly-nature of God. At the same time that Eddy was preaching her feminist doctrine, Smith’s followers in Utah were engaged in a bitter battle with US legal and social standards for their practice of polygamy. In addition to the LDS spiritual re-interpretation of marriage, Smith had also established a patriarchal order for church organization and administration.

*Eddy’s matriarchal doctrine.* Christian Science was not the first American religion founded by a woman. However, it was founded at a time when women’s rights in the US were evolving: women were working outside of the home in record numbers and fighting for (and in some states, winning) the right to vote. Eddy was able to take advantage of this climate and began to provide for herself after her second husband abandoned her.<sup>72</sup> This she did primarily through teaching her healing science to others, setting up schools and even a metaphysical college, and eventually investing in CS

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<sup>72</sup> For more on Eddy’s family relations, see Chapter Two.

publications and real estate. Shortly after her discovery of the divine Science, Eddy left off from being a poor, sickly woman, dependent on the kindness and care of others, and became the leader of what would become an international religious movement. Her forceful testimony in word and action of the divinity of womanhood only added to her popularity, though much of the press she received in her lifetime was negative (Cather & Milmine, 1993; Twain, 1993).

Still, what some see as the feminist message of Christian Science is often misinterpreted. Some argue that Eddy saw herself as the feminine version of Jesus, who brought the Christ-spirit to the world (Twain, 1993). Eddy often spoke of how, because the female leader of Christianity came after the male (Christ himself), Christianity must be most complete in its feminine form (Eddy, 1994). Based upon doctrines such as these, some followers referred to her as “mother Mary” and revered her in a similar way as other Christian groups have revered the mother of Christ (1993). Her church was also called the Mother Church, and inside was located the Mother Room, where Eddy would sometimes retire to write and study (Ivey, 1999). Additionally, reference to the motherhood of God can be confusing for non-Christian Scientists. Explaining her idea of the role of the spiritual feminine, Eddy said:

...let us return to God, the divine Principle of the universe including the genus man:—we shall find therein no occasion for departure, no occasion for strife, no suggestion of preeminence, or dis severance of the masculine and feminine elements of God’s creating—no question of who shall be the greatest. Then the kingdom of heaven will be here and everywhere, and

the one Father-Mother God and His children will be understood from everlasting to everlasting.<sup>73</sup> (Eddy, 2008, pp. 4-5)

In the CS sense, God is a perfect being with both masculine and feminine qualities. As his children, an individual's particular gendered characteristics are all attributable to the one divine source who is both mother and father of our spirits. As a father, he chastens and provides, as a mother, he nurtures. The feminine qualities of godliness represent a loving care that tends to both physical and spiritual needs simultaneously.

According to Eddy, the modern day is the time that “the reflection of God’s feminine nature...will be heard and understood” (Eddy, 2008, p. 4). Furthermore, “[w]oman is the highest species of man,” and has a special destiny to restore the divine Science in modern times (this is the CS interpretation of Revelation 12:1, which speaks of a “woman clothed with the sun”). Christian Scientists believe that women have a direct link to God. In fact, they reinterpret the stories of the wives of the ancient patriarchs to focus on their healings (of barrenness) after communion with God.

Eddy was (and remains) the head of Christian Science, and women have always been prominent in its membership (Hicks, 2004). In 1906, for example, there were only 38 men for every 100 women in the Church, giving it the highest percentage of women in any Protestant sect (Hicks, p. 51). The culture of CS is decidedly matriarchal—not only because it was founded by a woman, but because it largely remains a religion of women. Although membership statistics are never made public<sup>74</sup> (S. Gottschalk, 1987, p. 111), if one were to walk into a Christian Science reading room or church building, one would

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<sup>73</sup> Eddy’s spiritual reinterpretation of the Lord’s Prayer begins: “Our Father-Mother God”, rather than “Our Father, which art in heaven” (*S&H 16:24*). This prayer is repeated by church members during every Sunday service.

<sup>74</sup> The best way to estimate the current membership of Christian Science is to make an educated guess based on the number of practitioners listed in its quarterly publications (S. Gottschalk, 1987, p. 112)

likely find mostly female members present. In the nineteenth century, CS practitioners were overwhelmingly women, and significantly, this was one of the few ways that a woman could make an income (especially in a health-related field) at the time (Hicks, p. 51). Despite the majority of women in the movement, church leadership is divided between men and women. In each branch of the Mother Church, and in the Mother Church itself, one man and one woman serve as readers who conduct Sunday services. They read from *Science and Health* and the Bible. What is more—in a seeming contradiction between Eddy’s rhetoric and the organization of her church—when she died, most of the leaders of her church were men (p. 52).<sup>75</sup>

It is little wonder that Christian Science appealed to so many women. The theology of CS itself is nurturing and maternal. The practice of Christian Science requires quiet contemplation rather than quick action, and results are spiritual (although they may be manifest physically). Personal devotion involves reading, meditation, talking things over with practitioners and other Christian Scientists, and lots of silent and spoken prayer. Christian Scientists are above all else nurturers and caretakers of both the body and the spirit.<sup>76</sup> What is more, they embrace the maternal nature of God as perhaps the holiest part of His/Her being. For the Christian Scientist, womanhood is exalted and godly, and healing, teaching, and leading a congregation are among its most exalted rights and privileges.

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<sup>75</sup> Hicks suggests that the overwhelming proportion of men in Church leadership roles was a social necessity, and explains that perhaps “male involvement in the executive realm of the organization functioned in another manner affording CS greater social credibility and evoking approbation for what were otherwise ideologically unacceptable female behaviors” (2004, p. 52).

<sup>76</sup> Although Christian Scientists would likely point out that spiritual care is primary, and physical effects are secondary manifestations of Truth.

*Smith's patriarchal doctrine.* Members of the LDS church would argue that their religion elevates the role of women as well, although they go about it in a very different—and decidedly patriarchal—way. As discussed earlier, gender is seen as an essential characteristic in the LDS church, and men and women are each expected to fill certain roles in society, in the church, and in the family. Men are primarily seen as the providers of both spiritual and physical necessities. Women, on the other hand, are nurturers, caretakers, and homemakers, whose closest affiliation with divinity is to be found in motherhood. Once again, this is an instance of how biopolitical doctrine coupled with practice, helps to produce specific types of individuals. In this case, Mormon women often feel the need to align their own reality to the ideal set by the church. Often, this causes internal crises—especially when women are not married or are unable to have children.

The patriarchal nature of the LDS church is rooted in their belief in the priesthood, which they define as the authority to act in God's name on earth. Members believe that this authority was lost in the first centuries after Christ's death, and that it had to be properly (and physically) restored to the earth (as mentioned in Chapter Three). Through priesthood power, members have the authority to baptize, bless, and perform other sacred ordinances which the LDS believe are binding in heaven as well as on earth.<sup>77</sup> Only worthy men over the age of twelve can receive the priesthood.<sup>78</sup> Women are notably excluded from the rights and privileges that follow the priesthood. For

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<sup>77</sup> Primary among these is the temple sealing ceremony, which links family members together for the eternities. See Chapter Three for more about the significance of this process.

<sup>78</sup> Worthiness for priesthood ordination is similar to what is required of all faithful members who wish to enter into temples or who are called to leadership positions in the Church. One must have a testimony of Jesus Christ, believe that the LDS church is the true Church, and refrain from drinking alcohol, smoking, and any other unholy practice.

example, one must have the priesthood to fill most of the higher-order leadership positions of the church. Women are therefore excluded from the highest echelons of church authority and decision-making. Priesthood power is also revered by LDS culture, and although the authority itself is considered separately from the man who administers it, deference and respect are often given to persons who hold high degrees of the priesthood.

The priesthood is often used to bless the sick or heal the sick in LDS culture. Because women do not hold this power, they are dependent on men for their healings. A single mother with a sick child, for example, would need to call on men from her local congregation to come to her home to give a blessing. A blessing of this sort is also partially a physical act: it requires two men who hold the priesthood to place their hands on the head of the person seeking the blessing (unlike in Christian Science, absent treatment is not an option). Of course, women can always pray for healings or personal revelation. Their power is simply not as overt as a man's.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, women are understood to have rights to the priesthood through their husbands (a troubling prospect for single women or women whose husbands are non-LDS) (Anderson, 1993).<sup>80</sup> They are promised blessings through their husbands and their obedience to them.

The official rhetoric of the LDS church has always been highly laudatory of women, despite their compromised role regarding the priesthood. In an 1830 revelation through Smith, the Lord calls Emma Smith, the prophet's wife, an "elect lady" who has

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<sup>79</sup> There are some interesting deviations from this rule, however. Mormon folklore includes stories of pioneer women who, crossing the plains without their husbands, assumed priesthood authority on their own behalf.

<sup>80</sup> LDS women have always been allowed to participate in LDS temple ceremonies (Compton, 2003). This is notable because in the Hebrew Bible, temple worship was strictly limited to men (priests, specifically). Some, like Michael Quinn (1992), argue that the temple ceremony possibly gives LDS women the priesthood, and that current leaders have chosen to ignore the fact.

been chosen, and whose sins are forgiven (*D&C 25:3*).<sup>81</sup> More recently, Gordon Hinckley, president of the LDS church from 1995-2008, has said: “People wonder what we do for our women. I'll tell you what we do. We get out of their way and look with wonder at what they're accomplishing” (qtd. in P. Nelson & Mikita, 2008). Many LDS members support a similar view, and suggest that perhaps women are spiritual enough beings on their own and have no need for the priesthood.

The reality of practice implies a different view altogether. LDS women as a general rule adhere to the ideal of womanhood found in the church's teachings, as already mentioned. This includes an aversion to seek employment outside of the home. For example, a recent study has found that though they are employed at rates close to the national average, Mormon women are most likely to work part-time from the home (Chadwick & Garrett, 1995, p. 278). Additionally, the authors argued that employment rates among LDS women were “related to lower rates of religious activity, primarily attendance and holding church positions” (p. 277). Mormon women are also less likely than their Gentile counterparts to continue higher education—especially after they are married (Freeman, Palmer, & Baker, 2006). This is likely because the culture of the church highly values the presence of the mother in the home, caring for and nurturing her own children as no other can. Motherhood is understood to be the highest calling a woman can attain in this life, and it is said to bring her near to divinity (Church Educational System, 2000). Of course, personal belief and social pressure are often confounded in the case of Mormon women who play traditional roles as stay-at-home mothers who support their husbands and keep their opinions to themselves. Women who stray from this cultural norm often have difficulty justifying their own sacrifice, and some

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<sup>81</sup> This is not unlike the conventional calling of prophets such as Isaiah, who are first cleansed of sin.

consequently suffer from depression, repression, or get angry enough to leave the church (Ponder, 2003).<sup>82</sup> These feelings of frustration and futility are another side effect of the gender biopolitics which persist in contemporary LDS culture—despite efforts of Church leadership to change them.

The seemingly dichotomous ideals of womanhood espoused by the LDS church (that woman ought to be allowed to reach her full potential and be highly esteemed, while at the same time kept from most leadership positions and kept at home) do not appear contradictory to many LDS faithful. In many ways, theirs is a problem similar to those faced by other traditionally patriarchal religions, such as Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism. However, the LDS actually present an extreme case of modern patriarchy, thanks to their revival of the practice of polygamy, coupled with the low rates of women's employment and education (especially after marriage).<sup>83</sup> These practices, born from culture and theology, work on the gendered bodies of the LDS faithful and produce a specific type of woman—one the LDS believe will be particularly prepared for eternal glory.

### *Summary*

Differing views of the uses and significance of the body are only a few of many biopolitical conflicts between mainstream US culture and the theology and practice of the CS and LDS. Biopolitical conflicts in these sects include the discipline of the body and

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<sup>82</sup> This is not to say that Mormon women are not happy. Ironically, perhaps, a number of feminist Mormon intellectuals have defended the patriarchal nature of their faith. This defense often includes polygamy. As a whole, feminism is not encouraged in Mormonism (likely in response to second-wave feminism and the women's liberation movement, which undermined the Church's dedication to the family and the home). Websites such as [FeministMormonHousewives.com](http://FeministMormonHousewives.com) and [ExponentBlog.blogspot.com](http://ExponentBlog.blogspot.com) provide rare safe places for LDS women to voice their opinions. Surprisingly, the feminist standpoint among the LDS is often not contrary to the church's patriarchal teachings. Instead, it is the culture of sexism within the church—separate from its revealed doctrines—that these women wish to change.

<sup>83</sup> Polygamy has not been sanctioned by the LDS church since 1890. All reference to it here is in its historical sense.

the spirit, and the new religious standards for physical care outlined by these religions are sometimes in tension with US government guidelines concerning marriage and health care, among other things. Additionally, the biopolitics of the CS and LDS often run contrary to mainstream American culture, which values freedom to choose above bodily discipline. Both religions provide rich cases for studying the way that biopolitical power acts to govern the lives of individual men and women, and demonstrate how seemingly private religious affairs become “political” in their own right.

A Foucaultian theoretical framework of power—its relationship with individuals, its venues, strategies, and tactics—suggests the importance of the body on even the most seemingly metaphysical tactics of force. Ultimately, the governance of the CS and LDS are biopolitical, meaning that they touch the physical, temporal, mortal bodies of their respective memberships. These systems of biopolitics may be manifested in different ways, through different judgments, actions, or sanctions. In some cases, biopower may be manifest through pastoral strategies of governance, or those in which the religious leader take upon himself the responsibility of leading the membership to salvation. This type of governance focuses on action: the shepherd guides the movement of his sheep. Additionally, biopower may be demonstrated in a psychological approach through which the spiritual leader seeks to guide the internal thoughts of the membership.<sup>84</sup> Through these and other means, biopower may be understood to produce certain forms of action and states of mind. Ultimately, the CS and LDS uses of these types of power shape a different biopolitics, one that varies from those that guide the mainstream secular man.

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<sup>84</sup> The physical/political productive effects of the pastoral power of the shepherd and psychiatric power will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Therefore, these biopolitics shape the Saint or Scientist for his own Godly City, separate from the government and corrupting influence of the City of Man.

## Chapter Five

### **Corporeal Control and Moral Discipline: CS and LDS Uses of Pastoral and Psychiatric Power as Governance**

While the biopolitics of the CS and LDS are particularly interesting for their combination of this-worldly and other-worldly cares in the governance of their respective memberships, both groups actually use a number of strategies to govern the bodies and souls of their congregations. Primary among these alternative strategies are the habits of pastoral and psychiatric power, as explained by Foucault. Pastoral power is a power of care, one which relies on a certain relationship between the governor and the governed. It may also be seen as total care—of either spiritual or temporal concerns. Psychiatric power, on the other hand, is the power of the mind which allows the governor to actually shape the will of the governed. The CS and LDS uses of these and other strategies, including the power of belief itself, together make for a complex study of the role of political power as reinterpreted in the American religious context.

#### *Foucault's Theory of Pastoral Power*

Pastoral power, or the power that guides action, is often used by the CS and LDS churches to effectively govern the bodies of their Saints and Scientists. According to Foucault, pastoral power is the foundation for the system of government most familiar to western civilization. He also calls it “the strangest form of power” and one “that will also show to have the greatest and most durable fortune,” although “it was born, or at least took its model ...from politics seen as a matter of the sheep fold” (2007b, p. 130). Pastoral power, then, is the predecessor to the power relations that currently shape liberalism in the West. Although the metaphor of the sheep and the shepherd may not be

fully applicable to government function in a global sense, it does prove insightful to the American case of the CS and LDS in particular.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, Foucault believes that the pastor's idea of government is an essential component to governmentality, which “has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument” (2007b, p. 108, emphasis added). It is from the pastor that governmentality learns to value the *population* more than the *territory* of the state. When the government remembers the importance of the population, it begins to take upon itself the partial role of pastor.

However, just because a system of governmentality—through which the power of the pastorate is appropriated by the reason of state—may shape or inform secular government today, this does not mean that the pastor does not still exist separately from its institutional affiliation with the state. On this point, Foucault appears to be oddly uncommitted, admitting, “I am very likely still mistaken when I situate the end of the pastoral age in the eighteenth century, [it] is something from which we [liberal society] still have not freed ourselves” (2007b, p. 148). The power of the pastorate has simply relocated its sphere of influence from the public to the private. I propose that religious organizations such as the CS and LDS act as citadels of pastoral power, both competing with and complimentary to the more overtly political government of the state. Because the power of the pastor remains relevant to contemporary politics, and especially to the politics of everyday life, it is important to understand the ways in which the pastor is able to govern the lives of individual sheep and citizens.

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<sup>85</sup> Of course, both religions, while American in origin, are global organizations today, meaning that they spread, along with their gospel messages, a pastoral theology to the world.

But what does the shepherd actually *do*? After such a strong pronouncement of the scope of his powers, it is perhaps anti-climactic to note that the shepherd is ultimately a servant. Although his responsibility and authority are great, the shepherd does not own the sheep, and so is not justified in using them for his own exclusive benefit. Although within his occupation there is the opportunity for profit, the good shepherd will recognize this as secondary. Instead, the good shepherd sees his role as limited to the following: to care for the sheep, to guide them, to feed them, and to protect them from harm. The good shepherd fulfills each of these duties while maintaining an intimate relationship with each one of his sheep. He is always vigilant and constantly plans for his flock.

The ideal of the shepherd is a theme common to both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, each of which idealize God as the ultimate shepherd of humanity. Because God, in both the Hebrew and Christian traditions, is incapable of error, so also must the shepherd be spotless. This is one reason why the theme of the good shepherd is often romanticized in painting and verse as an ideal which captures innocence, purity, and goodness. In fact, there is no higher standard than that expected of the shepherd. This is because the shepherd-as-governor of the people is ultimately modeled on the relationship between God and his people. These roles can be seen in both the CS and LDS. Depending on whether one follows the descriptions of the God of the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament, this relationship may be more or less merciful, but it always has the bettering of the people and their benefit as its primary intention with salvation as the end goal. But, as readers of these texts well know, God cannot always be with his people. In fact, he rarely condescends to this point. Instead, he appoints shepherds to act

as he would. The shepherd, then, is the servant of God (and of the people), caring for his people on earth. This is no light responsibility.

Foucault describes the relationship between God, shepherd, and citizens as a simple one. He says,

this metaphor of the shepherd...allows a type of relationship between God and the sovereign to be designated, in that if God is the shepherd of man, then the king is, as it were, a subaltern shepherd to whom God has entrusted the flock of men and who, at the end of the day and at the end of his reign, must restore the flock he has been entrusted with to God.

(Foucault, 2007b, p. 124)

The shepherd is accountable to God for the care of his people, and so is obligated to take his position very seriously. He must “restore the flock...to God”, meaning that he must ensure their salvation. This is no easy task, because sheep, if left to themselves, will search out their own green pastures.

In addition to the overarching responsibility for the individual salvation of his sheep, the shepherd has many duties, and his responsibilities are continuous. More than anything else, it is his responsibility to care for and about the sheep, to manage the “fine points and details” of their existence. Every tedious aspect of everyday life is of interest to the shepherd. To manage the minutiae is his calling. This is where modern-day pastoral care becomes interesting and just a touch voyeuristic. According to Foucault, “[p]astoral power is a power of care” (2007b, p. 127). Among other things, it “looks after the flock, it looks after the individuals of the flock, it sees to it that the sheep do not suffer, it goes in search of those who have strayed off course, and it treats those that are

injured” (Foucault, 2007b, p. 127). This caretaking includes a long list of specific duties and obligations which must be met.

As the one responsible for the salvation of his flock, “the shepherd has to do a whole range of things,” such as managing the most seemingly intimate details of their lives (2007b, p. 143). Through the management of the most intimate details of the private lives of his sheep, including their mating and procreation, the shepherd is able to care for them totally. The sheep have nothing that they do not owe to the shepherd. Both the CS and LDS incorporate some of the tactics of pastoral care in their theology and doctrine, although their individual interpretations—including both the Hebraic and Christian forms of pastoralism—are unique. The following sections outline the theoretical significance of those uses.

*The Political Rationality of the Pastorate.* As a form of both spiritual and political governance, the pastorate involves several tactics to create an effectual system of total care. The pastor as governor is interested in caring for his population, rather than his own security. However, in order to fully appreciate the distinctive role of the pastor as governor, one must also understand the alternative rationality of the state. The two rationalities appear to be contradictory in motivation and practice, but both are relevant to the discussion of the political systems of religious governance within the CS and LDS.

Because the shepherd must always be motivated by the good of his flock, even to the laying down of his own life, the power of the shepherd is a different form of governance than the modern reason of state. In the thousands of years since the Hebrew pastor first ruled over his flock, the state has developed its own political reason. The “reason of state” is a key concept for Foucault because it marks a shift in the way that

man viewed his potential relationships to another. According to Foucault (2007a, p. 246),

reason of state is not an art of government according to divine, natural, or human laws. It doesn't have to respect the general order of the world. It's government in accordance with the state's strength. It's government whose end is to increase this strength within an extensive and competitive framework.

The aim of the reason of state is to "reinforce the state itself" (Foucault, 2007a, p. 245). As a form of government it is "concerned with what the state is; what its exigencies are" (p. 244). Furthermore, the modern state is primarily concerned with the protection of a *territory* rather than a *people* (p. 245). In this duty, it finds that "[k]nowledge is necessary; concrete, precise, and measured knowledge as to the state's strength" (p. 245). Therefore, the reason of state becomes interested in statistics and loses interest in the more colorful "fine points and details" of the lives of its individual citizens in a way that the Zionist proto-states of the CS and LDS do not.

Genealogically speaking, the reason of state is secondary to the political rationality of the pastorate, although it is not a direct descendent of the shepherd. It reflects an inward turn which privileges state security above individual security. To be clear, Foucault makes a distinction between reason of state and the kind of political reason that guided Machiavelli. While Machiavelli was ultimately concerned with the interest of the prince, reason of state is concerned with the interest of the state itself.<sup>86</sup> Of course, protecting the state can also mean protecting the people. A well-managed state

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<sup>86</sup> In some ways, it appears that Smith himself made the transition from peaceful pastor to political governor of his people, at least partially motivated by reason of state. The geopolitical and economic ramifications of this strategy are discussed in Chapter Six.

may very well see benefits to its population—or at least selections of the population. Still, the political rationality of the state is not involved with the people in an intimate manner. Its force is a centralizing power, where the pastorate is ultimately individualizing.<sup>87</sup> Thus, its motivations, techniques, and effects are markedly different.

Therefore, according to Foucault, pastoral power is separate from and prior to state government, although the progression of governance from sheep to statesman is not necessarily linear. Speaking of the pastoral power, Foucault refers to Egyptian, Assyrian, and Hebraic traditions as the epitome of its power, and argues that—while the two definitely overlap—the reason of state as we know it today is a relatively modern innovation. Furthermore, it is through the state’s borrowing from “the archaic model of the Christian pastorate” that governmentality was born (Foucault, 2007b, p. 110). All of this is significant to a study of American religion and American politics, because, as Foucault sees it, one form of government is an indirect precursor to the other—i.e., the pastoral is the prelude to governmentality (p. 110). Specifically, he says,

...if there really is a relationship between religion and politics in modern western societies, it may be that the essential aspect of this relationship is not found in the interplay between Church and state, but rather between the pastorate and the government. (p. 191).

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<sup>87</sup> It ought to be noted that the individualizing power of the pastorate is different from what Foucault calls the individualizing power of discipline. Although disciplinary power certainly has its place in pastoral care, they are not one and the same. The individualization of disciplinary power relations aims to normalize the population. Therefore, the power of discipline cares for the individual only to the extent required to normalize her. Additionally, the gaze of discipline is both always individual and always general. The disciplinarian at the center of the panopticon does not know his prisoners in the same way that the shepherd knows his sheep. Conversely, the individualizing power of the shepherd ideally works for the benefit of the individual—ultimately for her salvation. The shepherd knows his sheep individually for purposes that include discipline, but exceed them as well. The end result is a “new” body or spirit, guided by and dependent on the good shepherd. For a more thorough discussion of disciplinary power, see Chapter 3 of Foucault’s 1973-74 lecture series, *Psychiatric Power*.

Although the pastorate and the government rely on different motivations and techniques, they can either work together or co-exist in various situations. The intersections of these rationalities of power are especially good sites for studying the ways in which both affect the people and their perceptions of what government ought to be.

Perhaps the most notable difference between the pastorate and the government of the state is that, while the state is concerned with governing a territory and protecting a land, the pastor governs the individual by leading him from place to place, almost as a sort of nomadic machine. Furthermore, the state relies on economics as a tool of governance, whereas the shepherd primarily relies on trust and obedience to coerce action. Standards of good management, expectations, and values are therefore different for the sheep than for the citizen. And the outcomes are different for each constituency: according to Foucault, the state is a centralized and centralizing power, while the pastor's power is just the opposite—individualizing and personal. Unlike the statesman, the (good) shepherd is motivated by honor and a sense of devotion to his flock, and he is willing to literally lose himself in the attempt to save his sheep.

*The Hebrew shepherd.* But what if the reason of state combined with the care of the pastor? It is this particular mixing of the temporal and spiritual needs of a flock which define the responsibilities of the Hebrew shepherd. Anciently, the shepherd governor ruled both the spirits and bodies of a flock. As mentioned in the previous chapter, both the CS and LDS today exhibit some form of this biopolitical pastoralism. Both leaders also felt the weight of their callings to care for the “fine points and details” of their follower's lives. For example, Eddy felt that hers was an especially heavy responsibility (Eddy, 2003, 2007). Speaking of herself in *Science and Health with Key to*

*the Scriptures*, she says, “When God called the author to proclaim His Gospel to this age, there came also the charge to plant and water His vineyard” (xi: 22). She was not only expected to preach, but to also get her hands dirty, so to speak—to be actively involved in the care of her stewardship. This particular call to physical labor was answered by the mental work which led to the establishment of classes and colleges where students could come and learn the science of being (Principia College in Elsah, IL, is the most famous of these). This science included the need for “demonstrations” which generally acted on the body, literally healing it of imperfection. Therefore, the detailed administration of the Hebrew shepherd in CS works with the mind on the body to produce a new, spiritualized individual. In this sense, it is a holistic kind of care.

In the LDS church, Smith felt similar pressures as he worked through his own responsibility as spiritual and secular leader. His interpretation of the Hebraic pastorate grew to encompass both spheres of government. The shepherd of a poverty-stricken and wandering flock, he felt special responsibility for their economic and temporal well-being. Because many of Smith’s followers had given up their homes, families, friendships, and financial stability in order to join with him to build Zion, his tactics of government often included the mundane details of everyday living which had to be met in order for his people to survive on the frontier, such as building cities and planning for an economy. Eventually, after his people had suffered at the hands of their neighbors’ hostility and the President Van Buren refused to provide redresses, Smith felt completely abandoned by the secular government. On behalf of his people he asked: “Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions?” (D&C 121: 3). Seeing no other alternative, Smith took on himself the role of not only the spiritual, but

also the secular leader of the LDS, organizing their cities and planning for their salvation all at once. This mixing of authority did not sit well with citizens of neighboring counties, and fear of Smith's ever-broadening scope of authority fueled the mobs which eventually took his life. Like Eddy, Smith felt that he was an instrument in God's hands and fully responsible for the welfare of his people.

Perhaps the LDS church displays more of the characteristics of the Hebrew shepherd because of its unique claim to a spiritual and temporal dominion. For them, the quest for Zion led to a great gathering—first in Ohio, then Missouri, Illinois, and finally the Great Salt Lake basin. Generally, these were not choice pieces of land. The City of Joseph (Nauvoo, Illinois) was built on a swamp, thanks to the dogged faithfulness and tireless industry of the people. Missouri, however, was different. Smith claimed that Jackson County had been the place where Adam and Eve had lived, the location of the Garden of Eden, and the site to which Christ would return and from which he would reign during the millennium. In this instance, the physical land had deep spiritual significance. Still, due to their unpopularity, the Mormons were chased from Missouri and forced to leave the land that they believed to be their rightful inheritance. This would-be expansionism and imperialism within the LDS ideology, radical as it seemed to the residents of Jackson County, was a theological reflection of a more widely accepted American political ideology, as mentioned in Chapter Three.

Although they could not build Zion in Missouri, the members of the LDS church did the best where they could. Smith was a careful city planner, and his plans for the city of Zion left no detail to chance (J. Arrington, Fox, & May, 1976).<sup>88</sup> Because Zion was to be a collectivist society, division of land and access to resources were important

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<sup>88</sup> Smith's plans for the city, and the practical interpretations of those plans, are discussed in Chapter Six.

considerations (L. Nelson, 1952). Each family was asked to give everything they owned to the church upon arrival in Mormon settlements practicing the principle of the “united order.” Most often, the same goods were immediately reallocated to them, with the idea that any annual increase would be split among the community (Geddes, 1924).

Unfortunately for the saints, the majority of new converts to the religion were poor or had sold all they had in order to make the trip west to the Mormon places of gathering (Hatch, 1989; Hill, 1989b; Pillis, 1998). Thus, this kind of consecrated living was short-lived on the plains. It did, however, have more success in early Utah settlements, such as Orderville and Brigham City (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004).

Through this unique combination of interest in both the temporal and spiritual affairs of his people—evident of a dedication to both population and territory—Smith exhibits simultaneously the seemingly-contradictory roles of pastor and head of state. The implications of the effects of this combined power are many, and of great interest to the US government which has overlapping claims of authority and spheres of influence. The federal government’s reaction to the political workings of the LDS as a religious movement alternated between fear and vengeance during the nineteenth century: Fear, or perhaps indifference, because for decades they allowed the LDS to practice their own theocratic form of government in Utah territory, where they were protected by the Rocky Mountains, the desert, and a standing militia. The federal government displayed vengeance, or perhaps simply a forceful intolerance, when the LDS later became part of a personal vendetta of both the democratic and Republican parties, who wished to rid the nation of the “barbaric” practice of polygamy (Wicks & Foister, 2005). These mixed

reactions fostered a relation of mutual distrust, which only further encouraged the desire for the LDS to run their own affairs.<sup>89</sup>

*The Christian shepherd.* Like its Hebrew predecessor, the Christian pastor is called of God and is responsible for the salvation of his sheep. He also strives to be a good shepherd by caring for his flock and knowing them individually. Although many of the attributes of the Hebrew shepherd are present in the Christian, motivations for and techniques of governance do differ. As Foucault explains it, the difference is that the Hebrew pastor who leads his sheep and cares for each one individually has given way to the Christian pastor, who relies more on the ability of the sheep to govern themselves.

However, this does not mean that the Hebrew shepherd has disappeared entirely. Rather, the Christian pastor institutionalizes and intensifies the individualizing power of the Hebraic shepherd. As its modern descendent, the Christian shepherd figuratively fulfills many of the same obligations as the Hebrew shepherd. As far as duty is concerned, the distinction between the two is often a very fine line. For example, where the Hebrew pastor feeds his sheep by literally giving them food and physically moving them to safe pasture (as Smith did), the former feeds the sheep on a strictly spiritual level and leads them to an inner peace rather than a new physical location, often with the use of psychiatric tactics (as Eddy did). Action is still key, but it is no longer motivated by temporal concerns. Instead, obedience and the power of the will are emphasized. After the new political rationality of the state assured that government would take over much of the role of caretaker of the people's physical needs (looking after their health, economy, and prosperity), the Christian pastor is freed from these duties and allowed to focus on a

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<sup>89</sup> The LDS attempts to run their own affairs in Utah territory will be further explored in the following chapter.

more metaphysical style of governance—one which focuses primarily on spiritual salvation.

Because the shepherd has such complete power and responsibility over his trusting sheep—and because so much is riding on his proper management of them—it is especially important that he be a good shepherd, which, according to the New Testament, means that he “giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). The Christian shepherd recognizes that he is valuable only to the extent that he is able to keep the sheep safe. In other words, to the owner of the sheep, the value is in the flock rather than in the shepherd who cares for them. Although the shepherd’s duties are demanding, he is not irreplaceable, and he understands that the worth of the sheep—even one individual sheep—is equal to or greater than that of his own life. Of course, this is a depressing thought to modern sensibilities. But the ideal shepherd understands that his station is lowly and his worth not unquestionable. His only reason for being (or, at least for being employed) is to care for the sheep. The bravery of the boy who would later become king David is a legendary example of such willingness to sacrifice: as a shepherd, he fought off a lion and a bear to protect his sheep (1 Samuel 17: 34-37). He was not afraid to risk his own life, and was duly rewarded for his courage.

Like the dutiful pastor, Eddy and Smith both faced persecutions and danger for what they believed. As a sacrifice to her cause, Eddy labored through nearly 400 editions of her book—at great expense to herself and her faithful students—and was ridiculed for her writing style and lack of understanding of basic grammar. These attacks on Eddy were often printed in popular presses, and include an infamous critique by Mark Twain, who believed that Eddy was such a terrible writer that later editions of *Science and*

*Health* could not have been her own work (Twain, 1993). Eddy realized that her book would not always be warmly welcomed, “A book introduces new thoughts, but it cannot make them speedily understood. It is the task of the sturdy pioneer to hew the tall oak and to cut the rough granite. Future ages must declare what the pioneer has accomplished” (S&H vii:22). She felt that she was persecuted unjustly, and fought against all charges brought against her. When faced with defamation of character and “belied by wolves in sheep’s clothing” (S&H 104:3), Eddy stood strong and put herself in good company by reminding readers that “Also, Jesus’ life and character in their first appearing were treated in like manner” (Knapp, 1991, p. 261). For Eddy, the threat took the form of malignant “animal magnetism”, which is “mortal, material illusion....the voluntary or involuntary action of error in all its forms; it is the human antipode of divine Science” (S&H 484: 21).

In Smith’s case, the trouble came from angry mobs who threatened the physical safety of himself and his followers. When imprisoned in Liberty Jail, where he spent nearly six months, including the winter of 1838-39, he felt that he had been left friendless and alone.<sup>90</sup> In desperation he cried: “O GOD, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?” (D&C 121: 1). The answer reminded him that the troubles he faced were only part of his job description, and he was chastised by the word of God saying, “The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than He?” (D&C 122:8). Eddy believed that her third husband was a martyr for the

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<sup>90</sup> Smith was imprisoned after Missouri governor Lilburn Boggs issued an extermination order against all Mormons in the state because of “their outrages are beyond all description” (J. Smith, 1978d). Later, General Samuel Lucas told the LDS at Far West that they would “massacre every man, woman and child” unless Smith and others were given up.

cause, and Smith's followers gave him similar status after he was killed by a mob in Illinois. Both are fitting roles for the Christian pastor.

However, it is the CS insistence on the allness of the spiritual and the lesser significance of the temporal which makes it a prime example of the Christian form of pastoralism. Perhaps the most significant deviation of Christian Science from more traditional forms of Christianity is its complete denial of the physical. While Mormons believe that the physical body—and the entire physical world—are integral to the salvation of the soul, Christian Scientists believe that the physical world is less important. This re-interpretation of the world is rooted in a belief that the spirit of God is all-encompassing, to the point that it does not allow for the existence of anything else. While other forms of religious thought similarly argue that the flesh is corrupt and must be made subject to the better judgment of the spirit, CS argues that the flesh does not exist at all. The flesh, along with the rest of the physical world, is nothing more than the psychological delusion of a sinful mind. With the right techniques, a Christian Scientist should be able to live in the spiritual realm, almost unscathed by the trials and suffering that a physical world brings.<sup>91</sup>

The way to Zion for the Christian Scientist is not through the acquisition of land or the gathering of a people, as it was for Smith. CS is not interested in the material, and its members see the temporal as a fleeting vision that clouds the reality of the spiritual. When others focus on preparing for the here-and-now, Christian Scientists would remind them that life is not temporal, but is only spiritual. Therefore, Zion is not an actual place

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<sup>91</sup> At best, a Christian Scientist could only be “almost unscathed” because one’s own righteousness can only do so much. The sinfulness of the world will always attempt to bring seemingly physical suffering to a Christian Scientist. This was Eddy’s reasoning for why, among other things, she needed to eat and wear glasses.

in CS theology so much as it is a state of mind. According to Eddy, the mind (a fragment of the Mind of God) is the ultimate power readily available to humans. Her theology and practice rely on the mind in a number of ways. In one sense, Christian Science may be considered an intellectual religion, as discussed in Chapter Two. With its claims to science and all the undisputable “truth” the word implies, much of the early structure of the religion resembled an academy. Would-be students of CS were obligated to take a class (with a hefty tuition) and acquire a certification of their level of knowledge. Certain degrees of knowledge were required for one to be able to practice CS.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, perhaps partly because of its claims to science, and partly because of its metaphysical doctrine, CS initially appealed to an educated audience, including transcendentalists like Bronson Alcott. Because CS belief argues that mind is all there is, their care for it represents their ultimate spiritual devotion.

Despite this ultimate dedication to Mind, the use of the pastoral power of care in CS does not fully reject the body (because of the appeal of its promises of healing)<sup>93</sup>, but it does emphasize the force of spiritual care and its effects on the lived experience of its memberships. CS publications abound with testimonials of various demonstrations of healing, which changed the outlook and life practices of its subjects. As pastor of her congregation, Eddy cared for them completely—albeit from a strictly spiritual standpoint. Her labor was mental, and her products were books, interpretations of scripture, and the healing science she passed on to her students. The power of her mind fueled her pastoral influence over her membership, and Eddy sought to lead them, as a good shepherd

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<sup>92</sup> A CS practitioner is a faith-healer of sorts, who works by changing the mind rather than manipulating the body. A CS practitioner will pray with and/or for the “sick” person, and will often prescribe scripture reading and personal soul-searching as methods of self-healing.

<sup>93</sup> Although a Christian Scientist would say that demonstrations of healing are representative of healings of the spirit rather than the body.

would, to greener (metaphysical) pastures. Interestingly, it is through this mental force that Eddy invoked yet another strategy of power—a psychiatric power which potentially gives her ultimate control over the minds and wills of her followers.

### *Foucault's Theory of Psychiatric Power*

Through the use of psychiatric power, CS operates on a more strictly mental level. Still, its manifestations, persuasions, and effects may be biopolitical or pastoral. In a provisional definition of the term, Foucault says: “Psychiatric power is that supplement of power by which the real is imposed on madness in the name of a truth possessed once and for all by this power in the name of medical science, of psychiatry” (2006, p. 133). Because of the kind of empirical authority it claims, psychiatric power is closely related to science—it looks to science for affirmation, it wants to be a science in order to more fully justify its use. Considering itself to be a science, psychiatric power can easily shape the “truth.” According to Foucault, psychiatric power says: “I am the possessor, if not of truth in its content, at least of all the criteria of truth” (2006, p. 134).<sup>94</sup>

The relationship between one who wields psychiatric power and her subjects is particularly interesting because the “patient” has no claim on truth, and so is completely dependent on the psychiatric power to shape his reality. It can do this in a number of ways. First, psychiatric power, like biopower, can be corporeal in its strategy. Ironically, even though it is a power over the mind (and often privileges the mind above all else), psychiatric power sometimes relies on physical force as a means for disciplining the mind of the subject. For example, Foucault tells stories of men who refused to give up the fantasies that put them in the madhouse, and while there, were subject to cold baths and

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<sup>94</sup> Due in part to statements such as this, Foucault’s analysis of psychiatric power is often misinterpreted as a critique of the science of psychiatry. He strongly denies this is the case (Foucault, 2006; Rabinow, 1997).

other physical punishments until they learned to confess a different truth (1993). When laid out in these terms, this practice may seem like torture as a means of confession—and, although the physical punishment is not meant to actually cause lasting harm to the body, the effect is largely the same. Early on, then, psychiatric care depended on a relationship between the physical body and the psyche. To shock the body, to shake it up, might enable the re-configuration of the mind and the truths it so stubbornly held to. In this way, the body is a medium through which to access and heal the mind.

Another characteristic of psychiatric power is that through it, the practitioner imposes reality on the patient (Foucault, 2006, p. 165). In fact, I argue that psychiatric power is the use of *reality as discipline*. In the case of the CS and LDS, doctrine and theology re-define what reality is, and the new reality itself acts to discipline the thoughts and subsequent behaviors of church members. The church theology as governor of the psychiatric power claims to have a sort of monopoly on truth and creates a system dependent on its own particular truth claims. The idea is that if there is one truth and a person's actions or ideas do not fit into it, then reality must be imposed upon him until he comes to his senses. So psychiatric power is also able to shape the ideologies of its patients by disallowing alternative perspectives and imposing a singular point-of-view. (In the case of Christian Science, for example, healing is the process of admitting this “one truth” and denying all else, including pain and other physical sensations.)

Additionally, like pastoral power, psychiatric power is direction and is dependent on obedience (Foucault, 2006, p. 174), although it is the direction of thought rather than action.<sup>95</sup> In fact, according to Foucault, some of the techniques of pastoral power “were

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<sup>95</sup> Of course, thought influences action. If the psychiatric patient is treated correctly, she will begin to believe that the governor's will is her own, and her actions will conform to the standard of truth without

imported into the psychiatric field” (p. 174). This is perhaps most clearly the case in the practice of Christian confession, where physical discipline is replaced with strictly mental self-discipline. When considered in this light, psychiatric power is incredibly forceful in its ability to shape the mind of an individual without even seeming to do so. It is a moral discipline, rather than a corporeal control. This is, in effect, the way hypnotism works.

Hypnotism and magnetism are different tactics with the same strategy—to re-shape the mind and will of the patient. However, although they are closely related, there is a key difference between them: while hypnosis works through strictly mental powers, magnetism relies on physical manipulation (touching the head, for example) as well. According to Foucault, hypnosis and magnetism are means of transferring the power of the doctor to the patient. Therefore, it is no longer the doctor who does the healing, but the patient who is given the power to heal herself. Additionally, Foucault says, “the magnetizer was basically someone who imposed his will on the magnetized... precisely to reinforce further the effect of power that the doctor wanted to attach to himself” (p. 284). The use of this power “was to give doctors a hold, and a total, absolute hold, over the patient, but it was also to give the patient a supplementary lucidity”—hence, the confession (p. 284).

Significantly, the force of the hypnotic power of the psychiatric practitioner is only the power of her mind. Foucault says, “only the doctors assertion, only his prestige, only the power he exercises over the patient without any intermediary, without any material basis or the passage of fluid, will succeed in producing the specific effects of hypnosis” (p. 286). Therefore, the mind and will of the doctor must be incredibly strong.

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further prompting or external pressure. This internalization of the locus of power is precisely what gives this form of power its force.

While the Christian confession as an institution was changing shape and falling out of vogue in the late 1850s, “hypnosis appeared as the opening through which medical power-knowledge was able to force its way in and take hold of the patient” (p. 286). It is into this environment that the sickly Eddy was born and raised, and from which she gained a hope and salvation in the power of the mind that she was to share with the world in her Christian Science.

Because psychiatric power can take effect in almost imperceptible ways (as through hypnotism), its politics have the potential to be especially covert. When removed from the public sphere and housed in the private sphere of religion, psychiatric power has the potential to function strictly on its own terms. The power of the mind is ultimately neither fully political nor religious, but is personal, intimate, and therefore sovereign in its own sphere. For these reasons, it is a topic which must be approached carefully even by those skeptics who are not convinced of its force.

*Psychiatric power and the CS.* Because Christian Science emphasizes the power of the spiritual over the physical and the preeminence of Mind over material matter and other “errors”, its work primarily takes place on a metaphysical plain (Eddy, 1936). As previously discussed, Eddy herself was familiar with certain practices of mind-cure, faith-healing, and mesmerism, all of which she and her students formally rejected. However, the founder of CS was not always free from the persuasions of “mortal mind”. Because she suffered from a number of physical and mental ailments through most of her first 40 years,<sup>96</sup> Eddy was familiar with all sorts of diverse methods of healing (Cather & Milmine, 1993; Christiano, 1996; Haushalter, 1936). In the end, however, she claims that

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<sup>96</sup> Sometimes vaguely blamed on the presumption that her brain was too big for her body (Eddy, 2007).

none of these methods gave her relief until she discovered the divine Science of Christ through reading the New Testament (Dickey, 1986; Eddy, 1994, 2007).

Ever since that momentous occasion, Eddy and her followers have practiced a unique form of healing through mental practice. Today, a Christian Scientist who believes herself to be suffering from any particular physical ailment can turn to a Christian Science practitioner who works with the member to reason through apparent physical malady in a spiritual-scientific way. The appropriation of the term “science” by the movement is important because it signifies the type of careful consideration of the true nature of the perceived problem. Theirs is a theology of the platonic ideal of reason over passion—ideas over matter. In a telling epigraph to *Science and Health*, Eddy quotes Shakespeare as saying: “There is nothing either good nor bad, but thinking makes it so” (S&H iii:4). If the Christian Scientist will only think a certain way, he or she will realize that the City of God already exists, and is within reach. Because it is a metaphysical location, two persons may be sitting at a table together, and one may be in the City of God, the other in the City of Man.<sup>97</sup> This is the power of the CS mind—to transport the body or the consciousness even as it is surrounded by sin, sickness, and error—effectively commuting the consciousness to Zion.

As part of this transformation, the CS care of the mind involves changing the mind, ridding it of faulty “beliefs” in mortality and the physical world, and opening it to a spiritual reality. It is in the peculiar process of converting the mind that this study is most interested. Relying on what was considered by some at the time to be a cutting-edge

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<sup>97</sup> This is how one anonymous member of the Christian Science church explained the CS concept of Zion to me. Consequently, the CS Zion is not fully separate from the City of Man, but instead is present on a personal level through the mental perception of an individual.

science,<sup>98</sup> Eddy's practical theology involves a form of mesmerism, or mind-control. Of course, mind-control and mesmerism have negative connotations, and are terms that CS rejects. Still, understood in its most literal sense, "mind-control" is a perfectly adequate description of the way in which the Christian Science practitioner governs the mind of a believer. The reasoning is that if one has control over one's mind, one need not suffer. Instead, all one needs to do is convince/remind oneself that nothing that is evil exists, and so suffering cannot exist. With that state of mind, one is considered healthy.

Unfortunately, not every believer is capable of (or trained to do) the work of controlling mind. For example, if a Christian Scientist, despite her own best efforts, still persists in believing that she feels pain during labor and childbirth, she may call on a certified CS practitioner to change her mind for her. This process, although it may seem like mesmerism to the uneducated, is actually something distinctly different.<sup>99</sup> It is strictly mental work, where one person's mind effectively changes that of another.

The mental power and jurisdiction of a Christian Scientist are literally without limit because it is the force of psychiatric power versus material reality. Within the existing and accepted power structures of American society, this has caused a number of problems, mostly relating to the medical care of children, as previously discussed (Asser & Swan, 1998; Hickey & Lyckholm, 2004; Kipnis, 1997; May, 1995; Relman, 1983; Signorini, 1984; Skolnick, 1993; Swan, 1983; Talbot, 1983, 1984). Therefore, the mental

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<sup>98</sup> Charles Dickens, a contemporary of Eddy's, also practiced mesmerism and lauded its scientific effects and social benefit (Kaplan, 1975).

<sup>99</sup> Eddy was involved in a number of lawsuits in which she adamantly argued that her practice was not mesmerism because it did not rely on the physical manipulation of a patient's body. In fact, a CS practitioner may utilize "absent treatment" to treat a patient without the need to be in the same location. Physical proximity, of course, is of little consequence.

work of spiritual care becomes politicized through a sordid history of cases, law, and conflict in the popular media.

### *Belief as Political Force*

In addition to biopolitical, pastoral, and psychiatric power, it is possible that belief itself takes an active role in shaping the lived realities of CS and LDS church members. How does belief function as political power? Like any other force, belief acts on individuals. Georges Sorel (1999) describes the way belief in myths can transform society. He believes that myth (such as the CS and LDS Zion-stories) is a “historical force” which “cannot be refuted since it is, at bottom, ...the expression of [a group’s] convictions in the language of movement” and so is different than merely “historical descriptions” (1999, pp. 20,29). Therefore, according to Sorel, myths such as these have a practical transformative power.

As Sorel sees it, it is fully possible that nothing in a given myth will come to pass, that it will never see direct realization. However, this is not important to him. For the myth, action is secondary to the “pure” essence of a belief that Sorel describes as kin to religious faith—both are unable to be understood or fully appreciated by intellectual philosophy. Instead, they must be *felt* to be understood. Because myth is beyond science, it cannot be refuted or proven wrong (and so becomes part of a psychiatric hold on its believers). For Sorel, myths are all the more powerful because they aim at something higher than “terrestrial felicity” (Sorel, 1999). In their pursuit of similar, “higher” goals, the CS and LDS theologies and culture act as a sort of mythic ideology that inspire their respective memberships to action.

The locus of power for this kind of belief which inspires action may be partially understood to be psychiatric, because it directly effects what a person understands to be truth. A believer's view of reality may be completely shaped by his or her system of belief, the strength and desire of it. For example, belief for the Christian Scientist amounts to ultimately turning one's perspective of the world upside down and viewing the spiritual as the empirical reality and the physical as shifty, unstable, illusory, sensory experience. Therefore, belief changes the way that a Christian Scientist views the world—before any authority prescribes religious practice or demonstration, this belief by itself produces real effects for the way a person conducts him or herself alone, at home, and in the community (Bellah, 1970; Bellah & Madsen, 1985; C. Taylor, 2007).

Belief can also function as hope and inspire real action. As such, it can motivate a change in perspective for the LDS as they learn to navigate in the City of Man while simultaneously pledging their all to the building up of Zion. Hope and motivation are intangible forces, yet their effects are real. One who views the City of Man as essentially flawed and predatory to a more perfect version of society will necessarily demonstrate a different attitude toward what he perceives to be the temporary temporal authority of government, societal ideals of capitalism, monogamy, etc. This may be considered to be the Zionist state of mind, which, in the case of the CS and LDS, often sees the world as it relates to bodily experience. Belief as hope can also work silently to shape the new citizen of the City of God—the spiritual Saint or Scientist—even while he is living within the worldly city.

*Possible applications and implications*

The biopolitical, pastoral, and psychological effects of power on the religious body are indicative of a political form of government with important implications for the public sphere. Foucault settles the issue of the political nature of various forms of government interacting with one another. “What is politics,” he asks, “if not both the interplay of these different arts of government with their different reference points and the debate to which these different arts of government give rise? It seems to me that it is here that politics is born” (2008, p. 313). With their different “arts of government”, the CS and LDS give birth to a particular kind of politics in the USA—not independent of the state, but certain of its own authority at the same time. Messy relations between pastoral power, both of the Hebrew and Christian types, as overtly biopolitical and psychological strategies of governance play an active role in the government of religions in America—particularly those of the CS and LDS churches. Even in the face of the seemingly all-encompassing reason of state, the power of religion maintains its force and distinction because it “manifests itself in its zeal, devotion, and endless application” rather than “strength and superiority” (Foucault, 2007b, p. 127). How do these relations of power affect the lives and bodies of parishioners? Is the biopolitical power of the pastor over the bodies and minds of a people compatible with the reason of state—a governmental presence that can never entirely be taken out of the question? The final part of this analysis provides a case study of the nineteenth century LDS church and offers real-life examples as answers to these and other questions.

## Chapter Six

### **The Practical Pursuit of Zion: Geopolitics and Democratic Centralism in the Nineteenth-century LDS Church**

The physical appeal of Zion in the LDS church, coupled with a theology which teaches that matter itself is spiritual, has made theirs a particularly political ideal. Zion is much more than a metaphysical “heaven on earth” to Church members—it is a veritable City of God, where Christ himself will rule and reign at some future date. What is more, the early LDS believed that Zion must be built at strategic points of American geography (Kirtland, Nauvoo, and Utah, but most especially Independence, Missouri). Today, the call is for members to “build Zion” where they already reside. Although this contemporary form of Zionism in the US has lost much of its physical, geographical considerations, the hope for Zion itself—a real political kingdom to be established in the heartland of America—has never waned.

Because the hope of Zion still lives in and inspires the hearts and actions of millions of Americans (and millions more around the world) today, it’s peculiar politics deserve careful consideration. Specifically, it is necessary to understand the LDS interpretation of Zion as the literal earthly kingdom of God, and the role of politics, geography, and economics in that proposed kingdom. This chapter demonstrates the full extent of the LDS use of biopower as one that encompasses not only the bodies of faithful Latter-day Saints, but all the inhabitants of the earth, and even the land itself. The earth

itself as a physical entity, and all of the practical considerations it encompasses, becomes part of the LDS plan for attaining its ultimate mortal goal.<sup>100</sup>

### *Zion as Temporal Reality*

The effort to found a spiritual Zion in temporal reality was not easy work for the early LDS. Their building effort included the construction of temples (first in Kirtland, later in Nauvoo, and eventually in Utah), and a promise for members to give up all of their possessions to help build the kingdom, if necessary. Additionally, members were encouraged to “tithes” one in seven days to work only on the temple structure (Wicks & Foister, 2005), and women dedicated their time to sewing and crafting for the temple’s interior (Church Educational System, 2003). In this sense, “working” to better Zion was literal, physical labor for the early Saints. Because the kingdom of God as a political, economic, and geographical entity depended heavily on the dedicated labor of each and every individual member, it inspired intense loyalties and early members formed strong bonds with one another through their shared labor and adversity. The hope for Zion began to work as its own social (and perhaps socialist) political myth, able to inspire work and devotion (Sorel, 1999).

The literal building of the kingdom of God on earth also required careful planning on the part of its organizers (J. Arrington, et al., 1976; Jackson, 1977). Smith himself took on the role of city planner, and drew up an image of Zion for the people to work from. His vision included wide streets, large homestead lots to allow for gardens and animals in town (with larger farms for each family on the outskirts), and the temple as the central structure. Although Smith had no formal training in city planning (or politics or

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<sup>100</sup> The quest for Zion, while very important to the LDS, must be qualified as a “mortal goal” because the pursuit of salvation, eternal life after death, and other heavenly pursuits take final precedence. However, the hope for Zion is chief among LDS hopes for the here-and-now.

religion, for that matter), his plans were put into practice in several locations from Canada to Mexico (Church Educational System, 2003; T. C. Romney, 2005). Perhaps most famously, its lasting effect is seen in Salt Lake City, Utah, where the LDS temple still marks the center of town and city street names and addresses act as coordinates of a location in respect to the temple.<sup>101</sup>

During the early decades of Mormonism, it was important that the church follow strict guidelines for building and fortifying their city to protect themselves from detractors. Zion was supposed to be the capital of a great kingdom, after all. One early LDS leader, speaking to a group of missionaries, said that the kingdom of God was “to become a political power, known and recognized by the powers of the earth” (George Q. Cannon, qtd. in Klaus J. Hansen, 1968, p. 22). This highly optimistic view of Zion’s potential matches with the LDS belief in a prophecy which tells them that eventually no kingdom or principality would be left on earth except the (LDS-governed) kingdom of God. In many ways, then, the LDS interpretation of Zion is that it is the key transition from primitive, original Christianity to a complete fulfillment of that Christianity in the (Millennial) future.

The spiritual hope for Zion was able to inspire real work, and the practical result of this belief was manifest in the industry of the early LDS. Throughout the course of the 14 years that Smith acted as prophet of the LDS church, Zion had its own bank, shops, and printing press (Bushman, 2005). Inasmuch as it was possible, early LDS settlements—especially those in Independence, MO and Nauvoo, IL—were self-reliant,

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<sup>101</sup> The block on which the LDS temple is located is surrounded by 100 North, 100 South, 100 West, and 100 East. An address in the city might be 215 E 2700 N, meaning that the location is 2 blocks East and 27 blocks North of the temple. Similar grid systems organize many cities in Utah, especially those whose founding dates back to the first decades of Mormon habitation there.

and the saints who lived there were independent of the world around them to the greatest extent possible. Founding Zion in reality required a lot of hard work and sacrifice on the part of its would-be inhabitants. But those who were faithful enough felt the hope of a promise of a heavenly inheritance, and were encouraged to believe that the building of the kingdom of God on earth would be a literal event, one which would require willing hearts and able hands.

Because the LDS ideal of Zion incorporated temporal considerations such as economics and city planning—even an alphabet!—, the dramatic changes it brought through its implementation were often offensive to its neighbors. The University of Deseret, which would later become the University of Utah, introduced the Deseret alphabet in 1854. It consisted of 39 new characters used to phonetically represent the English language. A new written language would allow Mormons to control what their children read, and would help to acclimate foreign converts to the English language. Young pushed for the adoption of the Deseret alphabet for two decades, and although books were published, the idea never really caught on (Bigler, 1998, p. 56). Practical necessities soon demanded political consideration, if not accommodation. Smith recognized this, and worked to create amicable relations between himself and political and legal authorities wherever he lived.<sup>102</sup> Once the saints moved to what would later become Utah territory after Smith’s death, the political landscape was virtually barren, and the LDS had the space and peace necessary to begin again to build their cities. How they went about constructing their space, organizing their economies, and planning their

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<sup>102</sup> These attempts were not always successful, however. Eventually, the LDS were forced out of Missouri and Illinois because nothing could be done for them politically. President Martin Van Buren also rejected a personal appeal from Smith and reportedly said “your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you” (J. Smith, 1978a, p. 80).

politics in their isolated mountain home is indicative of their particularly tenuous relation with the US government during the territorial period.

Although the LDS did successfully rule themselves in what might be considered a theo-democratic society (Smith's own term), the political problems they encountered along the way suggest that their methods were considered questionable (if not outright treasonous) by the federal government. Interestingly, careful look at Young's practical system for governing his Zion reveals that such efforts actually have much in common with the ideals of Lenin's democratic centralism (a socialist system which also valued democratic aspects of government—more will be said about this later), which would appear just a few decades later at the start of the twentieth century. What is more, the US government was no less tolerant of the politics of Young's territory as they were of Lenin's proposed system. I argue that, despite the opinions of LDS church leaders and apologists who might claim contrary, the founding principles of government, unity, and economics are similar in both the early LDS and Leninist movements (which are also often based on pastoral strategies of governance). For example, both ideologies focus on solidarity, unity, and the need for every individual to work for the benefit of the community. Additionally, the early LDS, like Lenin, did not feel that democracy was incompatible with these ideals. Instead, they believed that persons should have the right to voice their opinions freely, demonstrating their God-given agency. However, as long as the people were all convinced of a single truth (the LDS gospel and the words of the prophets, in the case of the LDS), there would be no room for disagreement. Socialistic ideals for the benefit of the whole, based on a mutual dependence on one ultimate truth characterize both plans, and the ideologies of Lenin and Smith pertaining to temporal

welfare have a surprising amount in common. These and other similarities are further examined later in this chapter.

In addition to economic concerns, geopolitics were at issue in many of the US conflicts with the LDS. As the LDS continued to apply for statehood, their proposed territory was shrunk by the powers that be until the state of Utah was of a non-threatening size, isolated from any practical alliances with Great Britain in the north and Mexico in the South.<sup>103</sup> Because the LDS were perceived to be a threat to the political security of the US for a time (and not only a threat to its social standards), the US took preventive action against them by effectually shrinking the geopolitical power of the religion, surrounding it with states with demonstrated loyalties (or common cause against the Church), and delaying its own statehood for over 47 years after its first application.<sup>104</sup> Clearly, the practical, physical-political concerns of the LDS Zion expands its territory beyond the private, family biopolitics to include the economic and geographical concerns of a quickly-developing and increasingly influential population.

### *The Kingdom of God*

In 1855, then president of the Church Brigham Young said: “The Kingdom of God is actively organized and the inhabitants of the earth do not know it” (1855, p. 310). He was in Salt Lake City, the capital of Utah territory, which by that time was filled with tens of thousands of his followers and little, if any, opposition. It was a dramatic change in circumstance from what the LDS church had experienced in its earlier history. At the

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<sup>103</sup> These were allegiances threatened by the LDS church in its most desperate times.

<sup>104</sup> Brigham Young first applied for statehood in 1849, proposing the name “Deseret” and a territory which sprawled from the Pacific ocean in what is now California, to parts of what would later become Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, and Arizona. The territory applied for statehood five more times before it was officially granted in 1896 (six years after polygamous marriages ceased to be sanctioned by the church) (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004).

time he spoke these words, Young was acting as territorial governor, in addition to his duties as leader of the church. The kingdom of God he spoke of was being formed every day all around him—as his industrious people built cities, planned for expansion, and invested in their own industries. As he saw it, the happiness the people then enjoyed was due in part to their unity under the joint leadership of a politician and a prophet. For the early LDS, the idea that the authority of God could rule one’s temporal as well as spiritual life is a millenarian dream, one that they believed was fully within their reach.

It is also an ancient dream. In the book of Daniel, one may read of a dream had by Nebuchadnezzar in which he sees the kingdoms of the earth flourish and fade, each eventually crumbling to give way for the “stone cut without hands”—a Zion which would overcome all else. Interpreting the dream, Daniel says:

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. (Daniel 2: 44, KJV).

The LDS interpretation of this same prophecy asserts that the modern church is the realization of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Speaking of this connection, Smith says,

The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth. (*D&C* 65: 2)

These verses—both considered scripture by the LDS church—provide an Old Testament context for the LDS belief in the literal kingdom of God as a political entity. In

Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the kingdom of God was not only a religion that practiced evangelistic expansion. It was also a political entity that would defeat all other secular states and take their place, "fill[ing] the whole earth."

This dream of theo-democracy (a democratic government with God as the ultimate authority, advocated by Smith) was realized for several years when Young was the effective leader of Utah territory (Bigler, 1998).<sup>105</sup> This arrangement did not sit well with the church's western neighbors, and fear of the westward spread of LDS political power led to an eventual takeover of its own government, by its own government (when President Buchanan appointed non-LDS territorial governors and other leaders to replace Young and others in order to weaken their state-within-a-state). Still, the LDS were just about always running the show behind the scenes.<sup>106</sup> During this period (and for years afterward), Utah territory was run much like Smith's proposed theo-democracy. Elections were held, but candidates were almost never contested, and records show that all voting was unanimous, or very nearly so (Campbell & Monson, 2003).<sup>107</sup> Most of the political leaders of Utah territory were also church officials, and so disobedience to either the law of the land or the higher law of conscience was low.

The perceived calling for LDS officials to rule over both church and state—and their (limited) nineteenth-century success in so doing—is perhaps the most clear evidence that the LDS were effectively their own working political order, albeit one which

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<sup>105</sup> The LDS interpretation of "theo-democracy" appears to be more theocratic or oligarchic than democratic. This is one reason why Smith's political platform, and the over-arching political aim of the early LDS church, did not sit well with non-LDS American citizens.

<sup>106</sup> This was the case until the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when LDS leaders were arrested and jailed for their religious practice.

<sup>107</sup> This is not surprising when considered in context: the Mormons vote to "sustain" their own church leaders by unanimous affirmation. Additionally, all decisions made on behalf of the church's highest level of leadership must be unanimous among them.

ultimately could not live peaceably beside (or within) its US neighbor. In the end, LDS officials capitulated to US government authority, which outlawed polygamy and set guidelines for greater separation between church and state in Utah.<sup>108</sup> However, LDS dreams for building the kingdom of heaven on earth did not end there. Instead, they adapted to the political, economic, geographic, and social circumstances with which they were met. This flexibility through time includes certain necessary accommodations and practical considerations (such as the end of polygamy, explained below). At the same time, the core belief of the potential reality of Zion continues to inspire church efforts today.

#### *Practical Accommodations for a Spiritual Ideal*

The LDS quest for Zion was always a practical as well as a spiritual concern. After all, building the kingdom of God (and filling the earth, as per Daniel's prophecy) is going to take some work. According to John Taylor (third president of the LDS church), God was intensely interested in the political affairs of His church. He reasoned that,

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<sup>108</sup> The commandment of polygamy was rescinded by Wilford Woodruff, president of the LDS church in 1890. Explaining to the people the prudence of his action, he asked them the same question he had asked of God. Specifically, he said:

The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would take place if we did not stop this practice. If we had not stopped it, you would have had no use for . . . any of the men in this temple at Logan; for all ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion. Confusion would reign throughout Israel, and many men would be made prisoners. This trouble would have come upon the whole Church, and we should have been compelled to stop the practice. Now, the question is, whether it should be stopped in this manner, or in the way the Lord has manifested to us, and leave our Prophets and Apostles and fathers free men, and the temples in the hands of the people, so that the dead may be redeemed. A large number has already been delivered from the prison house in the spirit world by this people, and shall the work go on or stop? This is the question I lay before the Latter-day Saints. You have to judge for yourselves. I want you to answer it for yourselves. I shall not answer it; but I say to you that that is exactly the condition we as a people would have been in had we not taken the course we have. (Woodruff, 1891, Excerpts section para. 5-6)

The US government agreed to look the other way when it came to existing unions. However, no new polygamous marriages were to be officially performed.

By careful perusal of the scriptures...we shall find that God in ancient days had as much to do with governments, kings, and kingdoms, as he ever had to do with religion. The Jews, as a nation, were under the direct government of heaven, and not only had they judges and kings annointed of God, and set apart by him; but their laws were given them of God...Certainly if any person ought to interfere in political matters it should be those whose minds and judgements are influenced by correct principles—religious as well as political. (J. Taylor, 1844, pp., qtd. in Wicks and Foister 2005)

This was written just a few weeks after Smith went public with his plan to run for the presidency of the United States, and in the face of growing persecutions and a lack of government sympathy, members of the LDS church had a growing interest in secular politics. Smith and his people firmly believed that God had a place in politics, and their vision of Zion was also a political aim. And as time wore on, the strength of their allegiance to the Church only further separated them from any duty they may have felt to the United States.<sup>109</sup> In a letter to the editor of the same edition of the Mormon paper, *The Times and Seasons*, in which Taylor's words were published, "A Friend to the Mormons" wrote a forboding prediction: that the church "must not triumph over the state, but actually swallow it up like Moses' rod swallowed up the rods of the Egyptians. If this be not so, the Kingdom of God can never come" (A Friend to the Mormons, 1844).

The practical considerations and temporal/political accommodations for building Zion within US territory led to a certain geopolitics or spatiality of power existent in the

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<sup>109</sup> Although Mormons did continue to do their duty to the US government. They were law-abiding citizens, and nearly 500 of them made up the "Mormon Battalion" during the Mexican War.

LDS pursuit of Zion, which is more fully described later in this chapter. While most new religious movements concentrate their efforts on building up treasures in heaven, Smith and his followers were also interested in realizing those blessings in the here-and-now. To the faithful Latter-day Saint, temporal preparation is a spiritual necessity. They reason that Christ's parable of the ten virgins (five of whom had oil in their lamps and were prepared to meet the bridegroom) is not only a metaphor for spiritual preparedness—they believe that physical acts such as planting a garden, obeying the Word of Wisdom, abstaining from sexual relations outside of marriage, and building up a year's supply of food and water storage are means of "filling their lamps", so to speak. It is no exaggeration to say that the LDS as a whole embrace the motto of the Boy Scouts of America: Be prepared (for anything God might bring to pass). Preparation—both spiritual and temporal (with little if any distinction between the two)—is a common topic in LDS lessons, sermons, and articles. During the economic downturn in late 2008, the Associated Press argued that Mormons are perhaps the best-prepared Americans to handle financial crisis (Associated Press, 2008b) because they had stored food and supplies to see them through tough times.

What is more, the LDS church today (through its Deseret Management Corp.) is one of the largest owners of farm and ranchland in the country. It owns at least 49 for-profit parcels of land in addition to the Deseret Ranch (Biema, et al., 1997). A 1997 Time article (printed under the cover "Mormons, Inc.") reported that

The top beef ranch in the world is not the King Ranch in Texas. It is the Deseret Cattle & Citrus Ranch outside Orlando, Fla. It covers 312,000 acres; its value as real estate alone is estimated at \$858 million. It is

owned entirely by the Mormons. The largest producer of nuts in America, AgReserves, Inc., in Salt Lake City, is Mormon-owned. So are the Bonneville International Corp., the country's 14th largest radio chain, and the Beneficial Life Insurance Co., with assets of \$1.6 billion. (Biema, et al., 1997)

What is more, the magazine estimated that the LDS-owned farmland and other investments totaled close to \$11 billion, with an annual income from profitable investments alone at over \$600 million. As previously mentioned, the LDS self-interest in this world includes a careful consideration of finances. This is not surprising, perhaps, given that nearly 80% of Smith's revelations expressly dealt with financial concerns (Biema, et al., 1997).

Aside from the need for personal preparedness such as storing food and saving money, LDS church doctrine considers its temporal environment in other ways. For example, as previously mentioned, both Smith and Young were well aware of the political power they potentially held as they mused over possible alliances with Great Britain or Mexico (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004; Mackinnon, 2008). Additionally, both men were careful city-planners, dedicated to the United Order (Smith's collective economic plan) (J. Arrington, et al., 1976; Bushman, 2008). In an effort to promote unity and strengthen a poverty-stricken people, Young organized labor in the Salt Lake Valley and sent church members to various locations in his proposed territory of Deseret to stake claims and lay the foundations of LDS communities from Canada to Mexico (Reyes, 1997; T. C. Romney, 2005). All of these tactical considerations are discussed later in this chapter.

When a religious governor takes upon himself the responsibility of the physical, temporal care of his followers, as did Smith and Young, he follows in the footsteps of the ancient Hebrew shepherd described in Chapter Five. Though the Mormons (having been chased out of the borders of the US) felt that they had no other option than to care completely for themselves, their efforts to combine the interest of church and state only served to make angry a federal government which had previously been indifferent to them. After the Civil War had ended, the US government could no longer afford to turn a blind eye to the state-within-a-state that was Young's theo-democracy, because—despite the government's best efforts—it was quickly becoming a powerful political influence in the West.

#### *Zion as Political Entity*

Zion's preoccupation with secular politics actually began as early as the 1830s, when an environment of constant fear and persecution inspired the LDS to take matters of political security into their own hands. Nauvoo, IL, where the church was headquartered at the time, operated as an independent city-state within the borders of the US (Durham, 1942, 1944; Klaus J. Hansen, 1968, p. 20; Ostling & Ostling, 1999, pp. 6-7). In 1844, the year Smith was killed, it was also the largest city in the state (Godfrey, 1991; Madsen, 1989, p. 112).<sup>110</sup> There was no separation of powers in town political, legal, and religious affairs in Nauvoo: Smith himself was mayor, city councilman, and chief justice of the municipal court at the same time as he was prophet and president of his church (Ostling & Ostling, 1999, p. 7). Speaking of his uniquely blended powers on one occasion, Smith jokingly explained to a non-LDS politician that he alone was capable

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<sup>110</sup> This is denied by LDS historian Susan Black, who argues that LDS to add (1995) the population of Nauvoo in the 1840s was greatly exaggerated. According to her, it most likely peaked at around 12,000 in 1844, and began to fall off soon after Smith's death (p. 93).

of juggling such authority. Laughing, he said, “In your hands or that of any other person, so much power would no doubt be dangerous. I am the only man in the world whom it would be safe to trust with it. Remember, I am a prophet” (qtd. in Mulder & Mortensen, 1958, p. 113). Despite this attempt at humor, Smith never claimed to have political authority, although he did believe that it was each man’s responsibility to let his voice be heard. Speaking to a group of temple workmen in Nauvoo in 1844, he said,

It is our duty to concentrate all our influence to make popular that which is sound and good.... ‘Tis right, politically, for a man who has influence to use it.... From henceforth I will maintain all the influence I can get. In relation to politics I will speak as a man; but in relation to religion I will speak in authority. (J. Smith, 1978b, p. 286)

As this statement demonstrates, Smith ultimately taught that religion and politics are two separate realms of authority. In his ideal, politics must be democratic, providing each individual with an obligation or opportunity. Religious authority, on the other hand, is limited to those who are called, chosen and remain worthy (through obedience to church standards of behavior and belief). However, his opinions appear to have had little impact on his actual practice as Smith faced exigencies which he believed provided justification for his own unorthodox mixing of church and state.

Not surprisingly, Smith’s unique understanding of the interdependent roles of religion and politics did not please the US government.<sup>111</sup> However, it did serve to create

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<sup>111</sup> Former Idaho Senator Frederick T. Dubois explained the government fear of LDS political authority as an immanent threat. He wrote,

Those of us who understand the situation were not nearly so much opposed to polygamy as we were to the political domination of the Church. We realized, however, that we could not make those who did not come actually in contact with it, understand what this political domination meant. We made use of polygamy. (qtd. in Ostling & Ostling, 1999, p. 78) .

a distinctive culture which bound the Mormon people together. Bloom speculates that “[h]ad Smith lived another thirty years or more, as he ought to have done, then American history might have been very different...because much if not most of the West could well have become Smith’s Kingdom of God in America” (Bloom, 2006, p. 123). In the year that he was killed, Smith took a step toward realizing his kingdom of God when he decided to run for the Presidency of the United States (James B. Allen, 1973). His campaign materials include a pamphlet titled “The Prophet Joseph Smith’s Views on the Powers and Polity of the Government of the United States” (J. Smith, 2000). Recently, this document has been called “a moving prophetic witness of the forms and spirit of a society in which all men are accorded dignity and trust,” and “an intriguing blend of ante-bellum political rhetoric, Whig economic doctrines, Democratic expansionism, abolitionism, and the original and wide-range constitutional and political ideas of Joseph Smith himself” (Poll, 1968, p. 17). The church itself eventually adopted a political motto: “Exalt the standard of democracy! Down with that of priestcraft,<sup>112</sup> and let all the people say Amen!” (J. Smith, 1978d, p. 9).

As it were, Smith’s death led to two years of even greater distrust and violence toward and from his people in Illinois (Hamilton, 1992). Eventually (and reluctantly) stepping in to take Smith’s place was Brigham Young, who built his own “pragmatic theocracy” in Utah territory (Bloom, 2006, p. 123). It was there that the standoff between the conflicting aims of the US government and the LDS church came to a head. The final result of decades of tension was the renunciation of the practice of polygamy by the fourth LDS church president, Wilford Woodruff, who said,

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<sup>112</sup> Priestcraft to the LDS is selling religion or preaching for gain. Specifically, according to *The Book of Mormon*, “priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion” (2 Nephi 26:29).

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....And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land. (Woodruff, 1891, para. 4-5)<sup>113</sup>

The renunciation of polygamy eventually led to Utah's full incorporation into the US, although the process was long and often troubled by fear and animosity on both sides.

*Theo-deomcracy and Democratic Centralism.* Speaking of the political potential of his plans for Zion, Smith said "I calculate to be one of the instruments of setting up the kingdom of Daniel by the word of the Lord, and I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world" (1978, p. 364). As previously mentioned, his revolutionary gospel included considerations for Smith's ideal economy and political structure. He taught that in these, as in other matters, the people must be united. Speaking to the saints who were gathering at Nauvoo, he said,

By a concentration of action, and a unity of effort, we can only accomplish the great work of the last days..., while our interests, both temporal and spiritual, will be greatly enhanced, and the blessings of heaven must flow unto us in an uninterrupted stream; of this, we think there can be no questions. (J. Smith, 1978a, pp. 272-273)

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<sup>113</sup> Because existing polygamous marriages were allowed to continue without state interference in their family life, some such relationships continued for several decades after this statement was made.

As this statement demonstrates, Smith believed that Zion was to be built by communal effort, and all were admonished to “tithe” their time and substance in order to help finish the temple. Women sewed carpets and drapes, and men quarried stone. All did their part (even those members of the community who weren’t members of the church, according to Smith) to establish the kingdom of God on earth through industry and sacrifice (1978a, pp. 608-609).

For Smith, industry and enterprise were always communal efforts. In fact, according to him, the solitary efforts of an individual could not rival the impact of a group of workers united in spirit and purpose. He said, “[t]he greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always flow from faithfulness and concerted effort, never attend individual exertion or enterprise. The history of all past ages abundantly attests this fact” (1978a, p. 273). Because of counsel like this, the church members in Nauvoo and later in Utah territory were inspired by both temporal and spiritual desires to work together for the economic benefit of the group. In Nauvoo, for example, the people made plans for a railroad and a dam to generate power (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004, p. 17). According to Mormon historian Leonard J. Arrington, “Within two years the city had steam sawmills at Nauvoo and Black River Falls, Wisconsin, a steam flour mill, a tool factory, a foundry, and a factory for chinaware. They also owned a steamboat” (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004, p. 18). These were impressive feats, especially considering the poverty of the LDS people.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> The LDS system of welfare and its principles of economic equality have also had an impact on US federal policy. In 1934, Utah native (LDS) businessman Marriner Eccles was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt first to the US Treasury Department and then as Chair of the US Federal Reserve. From this position, Eccles had an opportunity to influence and encourage the birth of the US welfare state (Hyman, 1976).

Once the LDS moved to what would soon be Utah territory, they were perhaps even more dedicated to the idea of unity of both temporal and physical affairs. Former persecutions and a thousand-mile trek across the plains meant that most of them were in dire financial straits, and it was imperative to the success of the community that the people who were already settled in the Salt Lake Valley and surrounding regions make preparations for future waves of immigration that would continue over the next decade. Arrington and Walker (2004) explain:

The Mormon passion for unity and solidarity, strengthened and tempered as it was by years of suffering and persecution, at once provided both the means and the motive for regional economic planning by church authorities in the Great Basin. The means was provided by the willingness of church members to submit to the “counsel” of their leaders and to respond to every call, spiritual and temporal. The motive was provided by the principle of oneness itself, which was regarded as of divine origin, and whose attainment required planning and control by those in authority. (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004, p. 27)

This principle of “oneness” stems from an 1831 revelation given by Smith, through which the Lord commands the people to be one, saying: “I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38: 27). It also has roots in LDS scriptures mentioned previously: for example, “And the Lord called his people Zion because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them” (Moses 7:18), and “it is not given that one man should possess that which

is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin” (D&C 49:20). Clearly, this oneness refers to both spiritual and temporal states-of-being.

After Smith, Young expanded on this ideology of oneness, saying:

Except I am one with my good brethren, do not say that I am a Latter-day Saint. We must be one. Our faith must be concentrated in one great work—the building up of the kingdom of God on the earth, and our works must aim to the accomplishment of that great purpose. (B. Young, 1859, p. 280)

Equality of economic condition was seen as an extension of this rule, and a way that the saints could learn the law of sacrifice and bring themselves closer to God. That the saints have equal material goods, and that each took part in looking after the temporal concerns of his brother were imperative to the early LDS way of life—indeed, for their survival.

The focus on oneness and unity was so great that some even taught that inequality itself was a sin. According to early Mormon leader Orson Pratt:

Unequal possession of that which God has made for the benefit of all His children is sin. All nation, kindreds, and people are in sin because of this inequality. The Saints are still in sin so far as they approve of this unequal possession; and we shall remain in sin until we make exertions to put this inequality away from us. We must be one, not only in heavenly riches, but one in earthly riches. (Pratt, 1854, p. 58)

Equality of condition, not only of opportunity, emphasized the growing distance between the early LDS members and their Gentile American contemporaries.

The LDS concept of the kingdom of God was both a temporal and spiritual kingdom—the idea was that through hard work and sacrifice, members would be able to help usher in the millennium, and prepare the earth for Christ’s second coming. If the saints would only work hard enough, they might be able to realize Zion in their own lifetimes. Young envisioned his people “organized as one great family of heaven, each person performing his several duties in his line of industry, working for the good of the whole more than for individual aggrandizement” (B. Young, 1868, p. 153). This work, he says, was “the most beautiful order that the mind of man can contemplate, and the grandest results for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God and the spread of righteousness upon the earth” (1868, p. 153).<sup>115</sup>

The political system chosen for the kingdom of God was what Smith called “theo-democracy”. Ideally, a theo-democracy would place God at the head of the government (represented through his prophet or other leader), and the people would also have a say. However, the term itself appears to be contradictory. If God is to be the (figurative) political leader, who can justify speaking against him? In practice in Utah territory, theo-democracy meant that Young, as president of the church, had final say over the political and economic matters of the people. Individuals were free to speak, but dissent was not encouraged, and differences of opinion were often quashed by those with theocratic authority. In an environment such as this, dissent meant a lack of oneness which in turn indicated a lack of righteousness in the offending individual. Therefore, the minority dissent could never be justified in its complaint. In this way, oneness seems to trump democracy. Still, as a remnant of democracy, members were allowed to vote for elected

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<sup>115</sup> This ideal of individuals working for the good of society rather than for their own benefit is exactly the opposite of Tocqueville’s “self-interest well-understood” as explained in Chapter Two.

officials. However, many times the elections were uncontested, and even when they weren't, the vote was often unanimous in favor of the candidate endorsed by the ecclesiastical authorities (Campbell & Monson, 2003).

This system of governance seems antithetical to the American experience, and it was likely part of the reason for Buchanan's military intervention into Utah's territorial affairs. In fact, the Mormon communitarian experiment had much in common with what would later be recognized as distinctly anti-American ideologies (most notably, socialism) because of their particular interest in equality and economics. In *Mormonism and the American Experience*, Klaus Hansen notes that Mormon ideals of revolution follow models similar to those of "Jacobins, Leninists, and Maoists" (1981, p. 120) because of their shared emphasis on unity and economic equality. Justifying this strong characterization, Hansen says, "No nineteenth-century American movement had a more total view of the world, and none was more disciplined than Mormonism" (1981, p. 121). Mormonism's total view of the world was both spiritual and temporal—it included social, cultural, economic, geographical, political, and biopolitical projects. When considered in this way, perhaps Hansen's correlation between Mormonism and Socialism is not either as heretical or unfounded as it first appears.

A closer comparison between the two ideologies—particularly between LDS theo-democracy and Lenin's democratic centralism—reveals that they have much in common. Among these commonalities, as previously stated, is a firm dedication to the value of democracy, even when it appears to run contrary to an ideology of unity. In the LDS church, the term "theo-democracy" suggests that God (or God's spokesman) is at the head of the government. If this is true, what is the purpose of democracy? If God is

at the head of government, who can argue his position? The idea here is that the LDS principle of “oneness” will ensure that all members will be one with God—therefore, the consequent democratic system is a nicety, but not a threat (because all opinions will relate to one shared Truth). A similar ideology guides the ideal of Lenin’s democratic centralism. Of course, the ultimate goals of both systems of governance were vastly different, but the theory and idealism that guided both movements shared a common justification based on varying conceptions of unity.<sup>116</sup>

As Lenin described it, democratic centralism consisted of “freedom of discussion, unity of action” (Lenin, 2009 para. 13). As in the Mormon “theo-democracy” the “democratic” portion of Lenin’s democratic centralism was more of a formality than an actual political value. Discussion, while valued as an ideal, was of limited practical significance. Ideally, if the people are unified, discussion will be in harmony with the standards of the party (or, in the case of the LDS, the standards of theology). However, in the abstract, socialism is not contradictory to democracy. In a journal called *The Mormon Worker*,<sup>117</sup> Noam Chomsky (2008) wrote a perspective that many radicals in the contemporary LDS church agree with; namely, that socialism is not antithetical to the ideal society. Instead, he says, socialism has been a victim of its own circumstances.

The ideal of pure socialism, however, remains unscathed. Chomsky suggests that

[i]t is necessary to find a way to save the socialist ideal from its enemies in both of the world’s major centers of power, from those who will always

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<sup>116</sup> Of course, there are scholars of Mormonism who argue against this correlation (Yorgason, 2002), as do Mormon leaders.

<sup>117</sup> *The Mormon Worker* is an online journal that covers topics of Mormonism and “radical politics” (“The Mormon Worker: About Us,” para. 1 ). Although “radical politics” are not common in Mormon culture (or at least are not often revealed publicly), this journal appears to have support from both inside and outside of the LDS church.

seek to be the State priests and social managers, destroying freedom in the name of liberation (2008, p. 3).

One Mormon scholar noted that similarities between Mormonism and socialism are based on the ideals of freedom, saying, “[t]he idea of socialism is rooted in a romantic egalitarianism, where every individual assumes an opportunity to shape the future of his or her society” (VanWagenen, 2008, p. 3). This was precisely the type of system the early LDS had in mind.

Despite these seeming similarities, LDS leaders in the twentieth century have taken a strong stance against the socialist ideal and the practice of communism, calling it “a substitute for true religion” and “a counterfeit of the gospel plan” (Benson, 1979, p. 31). According to Marion Romney (cousin to Mitt Romney), “Communism is the greatest anti-Christ power in the world today” (1979, p. 3). Although the mainstream US politics of the 1970s strongly supported statements such as these, this hard line against communism appears to be—at least in part—antithetical to the early LDS experience (when the church itself was arguably anti-American).

Speaking of this relationship between the early church and contemporary ideals of communism, LDS president from 1985-1994 (and US Secretary of Agriculture under Eisenhower) Ezra Benson said:

It has been erroneously concluded by some that the united order is both communal and communistic in theory and practice because the revelations speak of equality. Equality under the united order is not economic and social leveling as advocated by some today. Equality, as described by the

Lord, is “equal[ity] according to [a man’s] family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs” (D&C 51:3).

He continues to explain the differences between the two systems, saying

Is the united order a communal system? Emphatically not. It never has been and never will be. It is “intensely individualistic.” Does the united order eliminate private ownership of property? No. The fundamental principle of this system [is] the private ownership of property. (Benson, 1977 para. 9-10)

Here, Benson is referring to the fact that under the United Order, individuals did own property—however, at the end of each year, their property was reassessed and any gain or excess was redistributed.

Such statements were in keeping with a position taken by the First Presidency (leading body) of the church decades earlier. On 3 July 1936, the First Presidency published this warning to church members against the evils of communism. Just 40 years after statehood was granted, they said:

We call upon all Church members completely to eschew Communism. The safety of our divinely inspired Constitutional government and the welfare of our Church imperatively demand that Communism shall have no place in America. (qtd. in Benson, 1979)

This is a surprising statement when compared with the doctrine of oneness, the practice of the United Order, and the theo-democratic dreams of the early LDS church. What is more, essential doctrines of the faith still promote ideals of oneness, unity, and economic cooperation which would suggest that Mormon sympathies for socialism remain. Groups

such as *The Mormon Worker* take note of this, but—despite a doctrinal basis for the contrary—the mainstream LDS church continues to take a strong official stance against any likeness of communism.

*Refuge outside of the US.* Even without its arguably socialist tendencies, the early LDS church exhibited more overtly counter-statal plans, including proposed alliances with Great Britain and/or Mexico. In fact, LDS plans for leaving the United States and allying themselves with foreign powers in North America began as early as 1844, when the Mormon's situation in Illinois was desperate and Smith began to take the political care of his flock securely in his own hands.<sup>118</sup> Anxious to have a number of options in place (and realizing that peaceful settlement within the borders of the US was no longer one of them), Smith sent scouts into Texas to see about the feasibility of settlement there (Wagenen, 2002). Mormon records show that Sam Houston agreed to sell Smith the disputed land between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande (Wagenen, 2002). Considering the political power displayed by Smith's promising arrangements, a Mormon newspaper reported:

It would seem that the entire Indian tribes, and their vast territories, were already under his jurisdiction in a great measure, and ready to cooperate with him, and that some of our western states, together with Texas and Mexico were in a fair way to strike hands politically at least with the Prophet. (Boston Correspondent, 1844)

However, plans for settlement in Texas were short-lived as Smith was killed before any action could be taken on this proposal.

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<sup>118</sup> After having been denied in his appeals to President Van Buren, Smith decided to run for president himself in 1844.

After his death, in the years of crisis and confusion of leadership succession that followed, negotiations with Texas were abandoned. Still, according to Texas historian Van Wagenen (2002), the secret meetings between Mormons and Texan officials were not a total failure because Houston remained friendly to the Mormon cause in the decades that followed, lending aid to them during the Utah War. Years later, in the midst of increasing tension with the US government over the Mormon doctrine and practice of polygamy, groups of LDS settlers relocated to the Republic of Texas for social and political refuge.

Texas was not the only place where Mormons retreated, looking for sympathy. In 1847, Young discussed the idea of colonizing parts of Mexico. Although no action was taken at the time, the passing of the Edmunds Act in 1882, which declared polygamy a felony (and the arrests which followed), was the impetus the Mormons needed to refresh their interest in Mexico. In the following years, Mormons settled a dozen colonies in Mexico (T. C. Romney, 2005).<sup>119</sup> Although the colonists did not intend to make themselves a political threat to the US through their emigration to Mexico, they were protesting what they felt to be unbearable religious persecution at the hands of the federal government. LDS colonies in Mexico (near Ciudad Juarez) retain a presence today.

At the same time as some of the early LDS were heading south, then-president of the LDS church John Taylor (a convert from Canada) sent a group of members led by Charles Ora Card to Canada's Northwest Territories to look for respite from US anti-polygamy prosecutions (Church Educational System, 2003, p. 609).<sup>120</sup> Mormons

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<sup>119</sup> Many of these colonies were abandoned by the Mormons in 1912, during the Mexican Revolution. Some LDS members eventually returned to Mexico, and Mormon colonies remain in Colonia Juarez and Colonia Dublan (T. C. Romney, 2005).

<sup>120</sup> The city they founded was later named Cardston in his behalf.

continued to colonize what would later become Alberta, founding 10 settlements before the turn of the century, and another 9 in the decade that followed. Some of the resulting cities were founded on Smith's carefully planned plat of Zion and remain urban testaments to him today. Like the Mexican settlements, Mormon colonies in Canada were not intended to accommodate the church as a whole or threaten already fragile relations with the US. Instead, they provided an alternative for those who wished to keep their polygamous families intact after US prosecution of polygamy began in earnest.

Not all early LDS foreign policy was meant to be non-threatening, however. Before his death, Smith also considered allying his people with either Great Britain or Mexico, either of whom, he believed, might grant them the peace they needed to quietly practice their religion. In 1844, he ask groups to "investigate the locations of California and Oregon, and hunt out a good location where we can...have a government of our own...where the devil cannot dig us out,...where we can live as old as we have a mind to" (1978, p. 222). According to Bigler (1998), when the Mormons moved west, they were looking to become an independent people, even though they would have happily remained a territory of Mexico (p 45). Additionally, animosity between the LDS and the US government was already building, and members of the LDS church were angry for the kinds of persecutions they had already faced and the lack of redress and protection provided to them by state and federal officials.

#### *Geopolitics and the Would-be State of Deseret*

Before many of these difficulties came to a head, the LDS church first tried its hand with the US government. In the summer of 1849, Brigham Young and other members of the LDS church in Salt Lake City put together a consttution for their

proposed state of Deseret. It was based on the constitution of the state of Iowa, where the saints had lived for a time as they moved west. Initially, Young had intended to apply for territorial status, but when he learned that California and New Mexico were applying for statehood, he decided to follow suit. Unwilling to take the time to go through the usual channels, the citizens of Deseret opted to take their newly-minted constitution directly to Washington D.C. and hope for the best. The proposal was ambitious: the would-be state of Deseret encompassed much of the land the US had just received through the Mexican Cession in 1848, from Mexico north to parts of Oregon territory, and from the Pacific coast of southern California east to the Colorado River (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004). Had this proposal been accepted, Deseret would include all of present-day Utah, most of Nevada, and parts of California, Idaho, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Oregon.

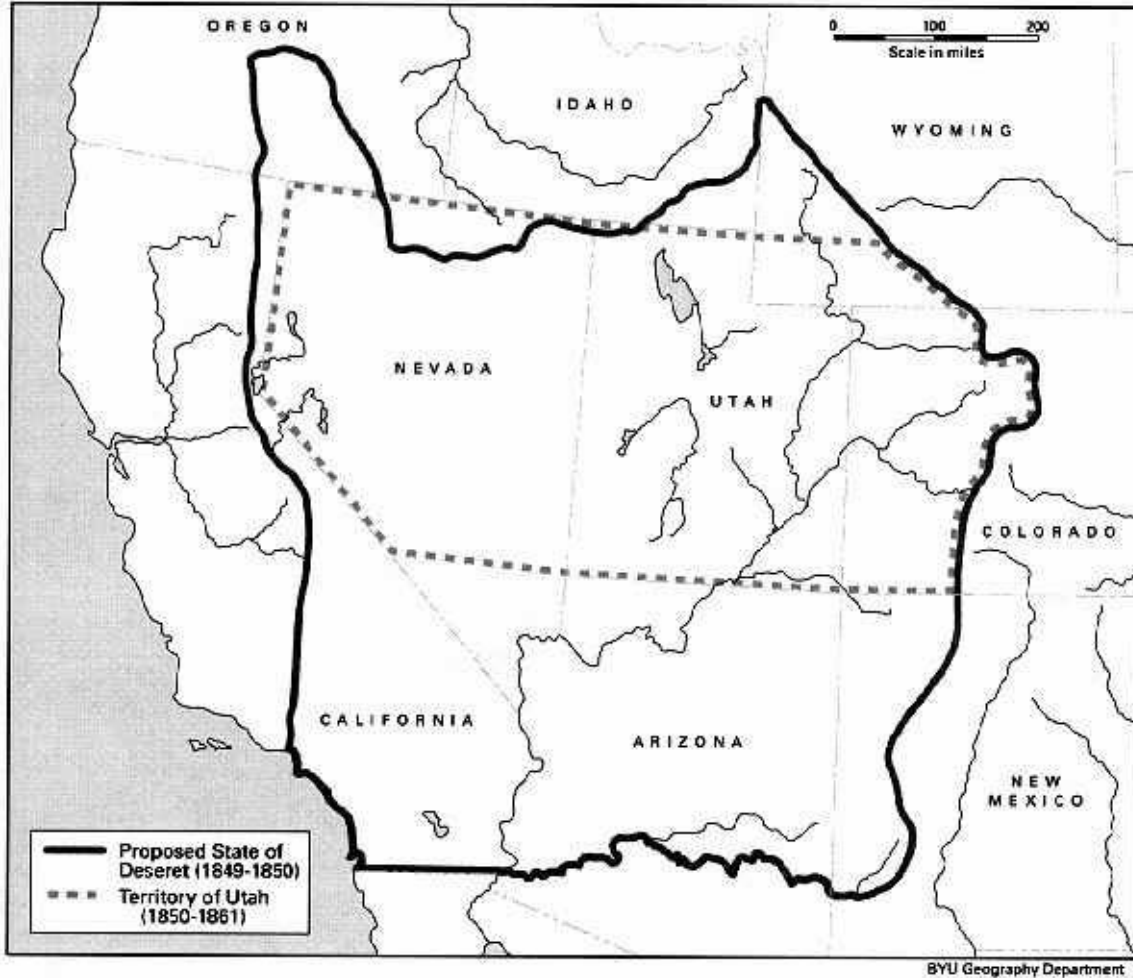


Figure 3. *Proposed State of Deseret. 1849. Even after it was cut back, the territory consisted of more than 220,000 square miles. [Image used with permission, BYU department of geography.]*

Even without opposition from the anti-mormons who were enraged at the thought of an LDS state in the Union,<sup>121</sup> the proposal would have failed simply because the territory that would be allotted to the state was too large, too unsettled, and, frankly, too un-American at the time (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004).<sup>122</sup> Additionally, Deseret

<sup>121</sup> Anti-Mormons did, in fact, petition the government to reject the Deseret proposal, citing what they characterized as unpatriotic temple-oaths and lasting animosities between the LDS and their national government for the ill-treatment they had received in the East and the murder of their founding prophet (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004).

<sup>122</sup> Because much of the proposed territory of the state of Deseret would have come from what had been Mexican territory only a year before, or under British control in recent memory, the US government could

simply did not meet standard qualifications for statehood, such as being able to provide at least 60,000 eligible voters (Thatcher, 2008). Nearly a year after Young's initial petition for statehood, Congress officially organized Utah territory (as part of a compromise meant to stay the Civil War conflict, there was no mention of slavery), shrinking its borders and secularizing its name. President Millard Fillmore appointed Brigham Young as governor of the territory, and generally allowed for current LDS political officials to stay in place because he did not believe it was worth the trouble to stir things up in the territory while the nation could better concentrate its efforts on growing troubles with the southern states.<sup>123</sup> However, a few officers of the federal government were sent to Utah with funds for the legislature and with guidelines to oversee the establishment of a territorial government. Although the Mormons were pleased to have some level of federal support, the outsiders did not last in Utah territory for long. Between 1851 and 1862, at least 16 federal officers stationed there abandoned their posts, "out of frustration, fright, or both" (Bigler, 1998, p. 59).

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not take the chance of having a group with questionably loyalty to the union in charge of its political affairs (L. J. Arrington & Walker, 2004).

<sup>123</sup> To thank Millard Fillmore for his kindness, Utah has both a county (Millard) and a city (Fillmore) named after him (Winder, 2007).

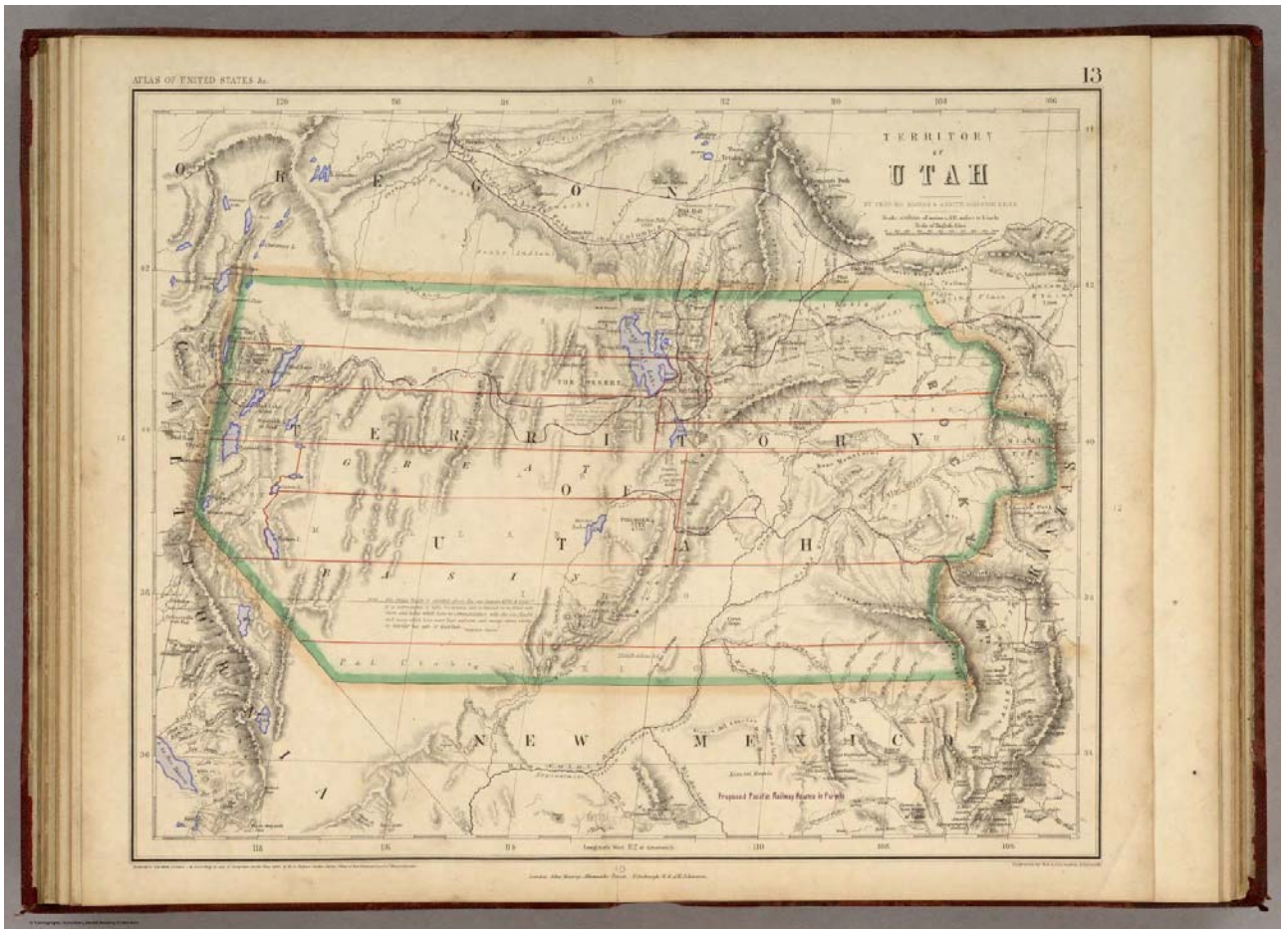


Figure 4. *Territory Of Utah*. by Rogers, Henry Darwin ; Johnston, Alexander Keith, 1804-1871 from 1857. David Rumsey Map Collection, image number 3825014.<sup>124</sup> Note how the borders have shifted from the original Deseret proposal. Even after it was cut back, the territory consisted of more than 220,000 square miles.

In 1856, after President Pierce allowed Young to continue as territorial governor in Utah, the people felt encouraged enough to put together a new constitution and proposal for statehood. However, they were disappointed again, this time with reference to the impending troubles between the North and South. The federal government simply had other, more pressing concerns at the time. Later that same year, at the GOP national convention, Republicans promised to do what they could “to prohibit in the territories

<sup>124</sup> Figures 4-6 are used through copyright permission from [www.davidrumsey.com](http://www.davidrumsey.com) through the agreement specified at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/>.

those twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery” (O. K. White, 1978; Yancey, 2002). In 1857, US relations with Utah territory continued to deteriorate. Soon after taking office, President Buchanan took action to remove Young as territorial governor because he believed that Young—as president of the LDS church and secular governor of Utah’s affairs—was incapable of fully separating the interests of church and state (Bigler, 1998; Mackinnon, 2008). In response to growing tensions with the federal government, and the unhappy prospect of being replaced by a federally appointed governor, Young said of his future influence in the territory:

Though I may not be Governor here, my power will not be diminished.

No man they can send here will have much influence on this community,

unless he be the man of their choice. Let them send whom they will, and

it does not diminish my influence one particle. (qtd. in Bigler, 1998, p. 87)

As theo-democratic leader of his people, Young was confident that his power over them would outlast any federal hostilities. Still, he refused to comply with US sanctions without first fighting to keep his rights to the government of his people in Utah.

Young’s refusal to step down led to what would later come to be known as the Utah War (the LDS called it Buchanan’s Blunder<sup>125</sup>), when federal troops were sent to unseat the legally appointed territorial government (Mackinnon, 2008). As described earlier, after wintering in Wyoming, Buchanan’s troops marched into a desolate Salt Lake City—Young had moved all of his people south, and even took the trouble of covering up the foundations of the temple they had begun to build. The territory was also prepared to defend itself with the help of “the standing army of Israel” or the Army of Deseret

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<sup>125</sup> See Hansen (1981) page 143.

(Bigler, 1998, p. 183). “The Standing Army of Deseret” was “[p]atterned after the Continental Army, [and] was created to defend the right to autonomous rule by Young” (p. 183). This autonomy, according to Young, had been infringed against the people’s will. He argued that the federal government had no more right to meddle in the private affairs of territories as they did of states, and likened its behavior to “British colonial vassalage unconstitutionally perpetrated by tyranny and usurpation in the powers that be” (B. Young, 1857).

In making these preparations, Young may have underestimated the ability of his own troops, or overestimated the threat of the federal militia. After several winter months in the cold of northern Utah territory, Young effectively starved out the Buchanan’s troops by burning supply wagons and keeping other help at bay. Still, Young understood that he could not hold his position for long. For a time, he considered burning Salt Lake to the ground and moving his flock south the Mexico, but in the end he simply gave up his governorship to Alfred Cumming, the federal appointee (Mackinnon, 2008).

Despite these political accommodations, complications regarding polygamy made it nearly impossible for LDS members to get any approval at the federal level. In 1862, Congressman Justin Morrill (a Whig and later Republican from Vermont) proposed a bill that would put an end to polygamy in US territories. The Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act, as it was later called, directly targeted Utah Territory and the LDS church. In addition to banning polygamous marriages, it limited church and non-profit ownership in any territory to \$50,000 (because the LDS were already building temples and other buildings, besides their other economic interests, their funds were above this limit). Although Lincoln signed the Act into law in 1862, no funds were allocated to enforce its

stipulations, as US federal attentions were focused on the more pressing matters of the Civil War.

After the Civil War had ended, the federal government once again took an interest in Utah's territorial politics. In the years that followed, Mormon leaders were arrested and taken from their homes and families for practicing polygamy. As a result of US action against them, LDS church officers were forced to go into hiding to protect themselves, their families, and the assets and other interests of the Church. One LDS man, Reynolds who was arrested for his practice of polygamy appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing that he was only following his religion and ought to be protected under the First Amendment. But the decision in *Reynolds v. United States* was not in his favor, and the Court found that the First Amendment did not protect religious practices which impaired the public interest (Alley, 1999, pp. 414-419).

For years after the case was decided, the Church was threatened by the US government, and feared that their assets (including their temples) would be taken from them (although this never happened). In 1887, through the Edmunds-Tucker Act, the LDS church was disincorporated, and all funds and properties (including its fund which allowed for the emigration of Saints to Utah Territory) were seized by the federal government. In many ways, the Edmunds-Tucker Act finally gave teeth to the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act, allowing federal backing for the appropriations of LDS holdings in excess of \$50,000.<sup>126</sup> In 1890, the US Supreme Court upheld the Edmunds-Tucker Act in the case *The Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States* (Alley, 1999). Under such pressures, it was only a matter of time before

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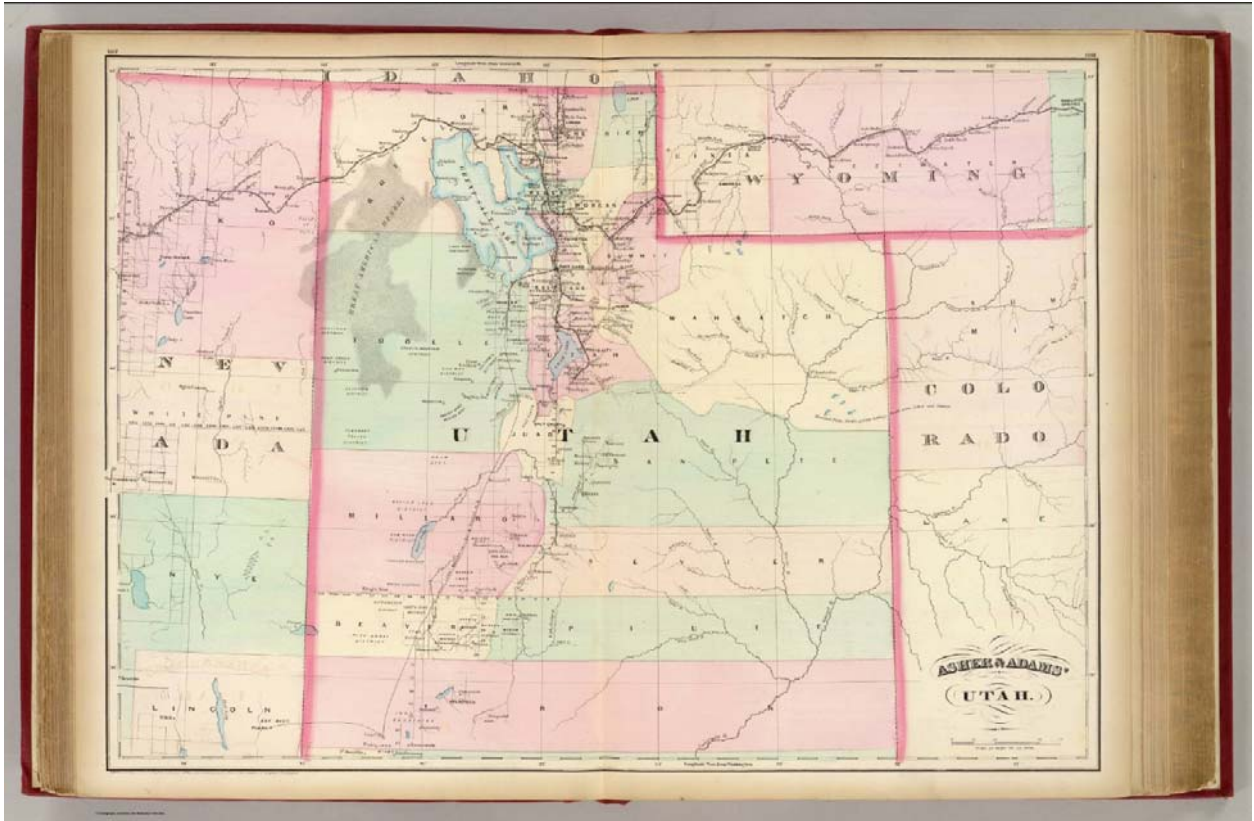
<sup>126</sup> The Act also disenfranchised Utah women, who had been given the right to vote in 1870.

the LDS church felt compelled to make accommodations to the US government (including giving up the practice of polygamy) to save the future of the Church.

As these court cases and the struggles they represent demonstrate, even though the Utah War ended amicably, with Young eventually relenting his position to Cummings, the geopolitical struggle over territory and sovereignty under LDS control was still at issue. As a consequence of continued distrust from the federal government, Utah's attempts at statehood were continually denied and its borders were shrunk, effectively diminishing the threat of Mormon alliance with Great Britain or Mexico. The quest for statehood became an almost unreachable goal unless some sort of compromise could be reached between the LDS church and the federal government.



Figure 5. Utah. 1866. Sterling M. Holderege. David Rumsey Map Collection, image number 2544005.



*Figure 6. Utah. 1874. Asher and Adams. David Rumsey Map Collection, image number 0041032. These are the current borders of the State of Utah. Notice how more land was taken for Wyoming in this final re-mapping.*

*Statehood granted.* After the Utah War ended, the LDS desire for statehood grew stronger. Encouraged by Wilford Woodruff's manifesto ending the LDS practice of polygamy, congress passed the Enabling Act in 1894, which set forth steps that Utah must follow in order to meet requirements for statehood. Additionally, the completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory Point, Utah decades earlier (in 1869), had brought Gentiles into the state at an increased rate. With them came national political parties, which soon replaced the People's and Liberal parties that had comprised the theological landscape to that point. With non-LDS enterprise and standards of economy and

family life quickly filling the territory [along with the sanctions of the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act (1862), the Edmunds-Tucker Act (1887), and the *Supreme Court finding in The Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States* (1890)], the threat of a Mormon state was much deteriorated. As the US map was quickly filling in around Utah, statehood could not be put off much longer—at least not on the old justifications of barbarity and disloyalty. It officially became the 45<sup>th</sup> state of the US in 1896. Full incorporation, including equal representation in the federal government, would still be a long time coming, however.

#### *Political Influence Today*

Even though animosities cooled after Utah's statehood was granted in 1896, prejudices still remain which make it difficult for members of the LDS church to be elected to federal office (Eastland, 2005; Gallup, 2007b; Lillpop, 2008; Orlet, 2008; Plotz, 2000; Washington Monthly, 2005). For example, in the early twentieth century, Utah's first LDS senator, Reed Smoot, had difficulty being seated, based on allegations of continued polygamy (Alexander, 2003). And reports suggest that prejudice against Mormons in political office has not diminished. A quick study of recent polling data provides a background for a study of Mormons in national politics over the last forty years. For example, Gallup polls trace the trend for Americans' willingness to vote for a Mormon president. In April 1967 (when George Romney was seeking the Republican nomination), Gallup reports that 17% of Americans said they would not vote for a Mormon. This number is the same in 1999, when Orrin Hatch ran for president. The number of Americans unwilling to vote for a Mormon presidential candidate jumped in

2007—a reaction to the likelihood of Mitt Romney’s bid for the office—before falling to 19% and later to 17% by the end of the year (Gallup, 2007a).

It appears that these numbers have held steady, even as tolerance for other non-Protestant religions have increased. For example, during the same years, only 4 percent of Americans were unwilling to vote for a Catholic, and 5 percent would not vote for a Jew.<sup>127</sup> This means that Americans are over six times more likely to not vote for a Mormon candidate as they are to be similarly biased against a Catholic (Gallup, 2007a). A slightly different question asked by Rasmussen in 2006 suggests an even more biased population. In answer to the question: “Would you ever consider voting for a Mormon candidate in a Presidential election?” 43% of Americans said no, 38% said yes, and 19% were not sure. The same poll also reports that 53% of Evangelicals would not vote for a Mormon (Rasmussen Reports, 2006). According to this poll, bias against a Mormon candidate would virtually preclude him or her from winning a national election.

In 2008, Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign struggled with lingering effects of the unpopularity of his religion. In fact, if it weren’t for his religion and the prejudice against it, some believe that Romney may have been more successful. According to the Canada Free Press, Mitt Romney was “the most Republican, most conservative, most qualified, and most devoted person running.” Furthermore, they described him as “decent, honest, and competent... the best candidate for the open position in the White House” (Lillpop, 2008). Similarly, *The Washington Monthly* saw Mitt as an ideal candidate—the kind Republicans dream of: “a social conservative from the most cerulean of blue states who can please the base while not scaring off the moderate” (Washington

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<sup>127</sup> Comparatively, a Mormon would still fare better than an atheist, because 54 percent of Americans would not vote for a person who did not believe in God (Gallup, 2007b).

Monthly, 2005). Nevertheless, despite this praise in the press and his unique combination of economic and political ability (made especially important in the recession which began in 2008), Romney was not able to overcome opposition against his religious beliefs.<sup>128</sup> In an article titled “No Mormons Need Apply”, a writer for the *American Spectator* observed: “It now seems undeniable that religion played the key role in Mitt Romney’s failure to win the Republican nomination, or, for that matter, to finish a close second” (Orlet, 2008).

Apart from electoral politics, the LDS church as an American cultural phenomenon has enjoyed critical attention in recent decades. Presses such as the Oxford University Press and the University of Illinois Press have helped to launch a new age of Mormon scholarship to both academic and popular audiences. Recently, Mormon studies as a topic of study has gained popularity outside of the Mountain West, and Mormon studies courses and programs have appeared at universities around the country (Paulson, 2008). Most notably, Claremont Graduate College recently added a new Mormon Studies Program and appointed Richard Bushman, a well-known scholar of Mormonism, to be its endowed chair. Mormon studies circles have their own venues for conferences and publishing (the Mormon History Association, *Dialogue*, *BYU Studies*, *The Mormon Worker*, and Mormon Scholars in the Humanities, just to name a few), and have earned a place in the broader religious studies subfield. Ongoing public relations battles—most recently centered on polygamy in fundamentalist groups and opposition to gay marriage—continue to keep Mormonism in the popular spotlight, as well.

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<sup>128</sup> Of course, there were other factors which contributed to Mitt Romney’s ultimate failure in 2008, including his reputation for flip-flopping on issues such as abortion and gay marriage.

What is more, because of the reverence that most Mormons feel for the heritage of the early church, some would argue that the LDS church today still governs itself as a state within a state (Ostling & Ostling, 1999; Quinn, 1994). The LDS church has its own sustainable system of welfare and its own economic and political interests (Church Educational System, 2003; R. E. Nelson, 1993). While LDS members today officially pledge: “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law,” it is clear that loyalty is expected to be given primarily to the church (A of F 12). As this dedication together with the LDS history of conflict with US state and federal government indicates, questions of governance (which authority has the right to discipline the bodies of LDS Saints?) remain complicated. Nevertheless, it appears that if the leader of the LDS church today were to officially sanction a return to theo-democracy, the pieces are in place to facilitate that aim at some operable level (Campbell & Monson, 2003)—largely thanks to the economic systems and political associations mentioned previously. Ultimately, the LDS have not forsaken their hope for Zion, and in their private industry and public politics, they work to keep that hope alive.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Of course, LDS splinter groups, unlike the parent church, have not abandoned their this-worldly quest for Zion. As previously mentioned, groups like the Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints (FLDS) continue to live communally, separate from American culture and often in contradiction to US law.

## Chapter Seven

### **Conclusion: Mind, Body, Spirit, Politics**

As the preceding arguments demonstrate, a Foucaultian analysis of the Christian Science and Latter-day Saint religions reveals that not only were they representative of intensely American moments in history, but their political interpretations of the body, mind, and spirit of their memberships, along with their specific strategies and tactics for governing them, remain significant today—largely for the kinds of questions they uncover regarding the proper avenues of governance and the place of religious life and practice as it shapes the lived realities of American citizens. The following experience I had while visiting the Christian Science Church in Boston provides one example of how the CS metaphysical commitment to governance continues today.

While visiting the Christian Science Reading room across the street from the Mother Church in Boston in the fall of 2008, I was invited to join a group of faithful members who met weekly for what they called a “*Monitor* reading group”. Six of us sat around the table and decided to research recent *Monitor* articles that had to do with a topic that was relevant in our lives—finance. Using search tools and the *Monitor*’s online audio reader, we found and listened to a few articles from previous weeks which discussed the possibility of financial recession and economic downturn in the US and around the world. With this reality in mind, members of the group separated and individually went to sourcebooks and the internet to discover what kind of answers Christian Science might provide for the impending financial crisis.

Fifteen minutes later, we returned to the table with our results—scriptures from *Science and Health*, and other quotes from Mary Baker Eddy’s numerous speeches and

publications. These were shared with the group, and together we discussed ways that we all might personally pray for the particular situation in question. Key among the group's findings were themes like comfort and the idea that "wealth" in its spiritual sense could not be taken away from anyone unwillingly. Practical advice relating to personal finance was also shared.

Throughout the course of the half-hour meeting, group members shared their own personal testimonies of the allness of God and the nothingness of matter. Those present represented a range of possible interpretations for this doctrine, from the practical ("you should still take care of your body's needs") to the wholly spiritual ("but that won't solve the real problem"). From them, and others whom I have since met, I have learned something of the strength of the CS faith in its individual members. As my experience at the reading group demonstrated, theirs is a practical religion—and for this, it is able to remain relevant through changing times. Although anti-materialist ideologies are no longer as popular as they may have been in Eddy's time and place, Christian Scientists today recognize the need to acknowledge the world (and, through publications such as the *Monitor* and reading groups such as this, to shape it).

The body politics of Christian Science continues today, as evidenced by the kinds of examples of healing and health care described in this analysis. Coupled with this biopolitical theology is a less obvious political influence that takes place through the meditation and prayers of the CS faithful. As they study and ponder the real-world problems of hunger, pollution, and corruption, Christian Scientists around the world—like those who met formally in the *Monitor* group—pray over the world's problems, seeking to "heal" them. This is perhaps the strongest indication of the scope of what

Foucault might refer to as their psychiatric power, or the CS ability to heal humanity through the power of mind/Mind. As they pray over global conflict, national politics, family issues, or private matters, Christian Scientists demonstrate what they believe to be a real, effective, spiritual and productive power. Whether or not the results of this effort may be measured, the perception of power is real on the part of the Christian Scientist who prays and studies in faith. Here again, a Sorelian standpoint would suggest that in a case such as this, much of the force of power is in the belief one places in it. Therefore, the potential of CS prayer to shape those who believe in it is immeasurable.

Admittedly, the potential political power of bodies, minds, and spirits is difficult to assess (because it is largely metaphysical). However, if past conflicts with government and mainstream ideologies are any indication, both the CS and LDS faiths have been seen as potential threats to the American way of life. Of course, this is not to say that either the power of the CS mind or the LDS body is enough to uproot the American political system. Still, their doctrinal histories, together with current standards of practice provide insight into the different forms of power at work in American systems of belief, and the ways that the mainstream reacts to them. This analysis, grounded in a Foucaultian understanding of power in its various forms—most essentially biopower, psychiatric power, and pastoral power—has sought to understand the rationality of the religious governments of the CS and LDS churches. Such an undertaking requires a holistic appreciation for the histories, cultures, doctrines, theologies, and lived practices that shape the bodies, minds, and souls of the American citizens who are also Saints or Scientists.

*Historical and Theoretical Insights*

Historically, the very different manifestations of Zion both created a stir in their immediate environments, and attracted negative attention from the US government. This is true even though, as mentioned in Chapters Two and Three, the CS and LDS faiths reflected and magnified certain characteristics of the American social and political concerns from their historical milieus. By embracing portions of popular transcendental and Jacksonian ideologies, each group was able to make a place for itself during its founding period and attract followers who already were believers in either metaphysical spiritualism or rugged individualism. Also, many Americans were already used to the idea of religious self-interest as Tocqueville described it, making a health-care and healing based religion not only justifiable, but positively righteous. What is more, the LDS religion, with its emphasis on this-worldly family and social economics, as well as the politics of imperialism, was deemed “the American religion” for the way that it encapsulated and deified core American democratic values.

It is important to remember that both religions were reflective of some part of the American experience because they are in many ways indebted/attached to the broader ideological/political/social moments into which they were born. No matter how heretical their spiritual ideologies would later appear to mainstream American culture, the value systems of the CS and LDS are very much rooted in their own American context. They cling to American values of freedom, independence of conscience, and the ethic of spiritual and temporal rewards for the hard work and determination that is necessary to found a new religious movement and help it to succeed. Because of the particular intensity of their American spirit, these religions provide a unique outside-inside perspective of the hopes and anxieties of real Americans—they are intensely American

while at the same time they are decidedly “other” to the mainstream American experience (as court cases and litigations, among other less formal disputes, have shown).

Additionally, their reification of contemporary concerns (like manifest destiny, individualism, metaphysics, or women’s rights) lends insight into culture and the private practice of everyday living (and its strategies and tactics for quiet rebellion) in the nineteenth-century US.

Of course, the adoption of popular social and political ideologies into new theology also posed problems for the CS and LDS early on. As much as these religions were relevant in a cultural sense, they were often seen as misguided or downright deceptive and malicious by the most stalwart guardians of culture. For example, Christian Science—although it appealed to the sick as well as the empiricist—was seen as a fraud by much of the medical community and others who refused to believe in its truth. Similarly, Smith’s theology of America as a modern holy land was viewed as unpatriotic and even hostile to the nation’s mores. These and other problems led to legal disputes in the case of the CS and geopolitical disputes in the LDS which included a military action against the territory of Utah in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Therefore, the preceding analysis encourages further questions regarding the possible relationships between the pastorate and the state/federal/secular government in the US. Although many have suggested that the US is a nation built upon religious principles and complete with its own practiced “civic religion” (Bloom, 2006; Holland, 2007; Noll & Harlow, 2007), debates such as those inspired by CS and LDS interactions with the federal government (both historically and today) suggest that the matter is far from settled. This does not mean that relations between church and state in the US are in

any way estranged or limited, however. For example, the expansion of President Clinton's "charitable choice" into George W. Bush's Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives suggests that the working relation between the governance of both spheres continues to exist (Newswander & Newswander, 2009). The specific nature of these continuing partnerships and their significance for the practice of governance (of both private and public life) in the US provide avenues for future study.

As stated previously, nineteenth century social, historical, and political contexts were fertile ground for the birth and support of Christian Science and Mormonism as distinctively American religions, reflective of their time and impossibly attached to them. Yet both movements survived long after their founding periods and outlasted many similar nineteenth century social-religious experiments. The Christian Science Church flourished into the 1920s, and since then has seen its membership and popularity decline, perhaps in inverse proportion to the advances of science and medicine (S. Gottschalk, 1987; Woodward, 1987). Still, through its publications and prayers, CS remains an active part of its current milieu. The LDS church, on the other hand, has experienced continued growth, and in the last centuries has gone from a fledgling western-frontier religion to what some have predicted to be the next world religion (Ostling & Ostling, 1999). Its membership now equals more than 13 million, and its meetinghouses and temples dot the earth. Although smaller, CS is also now a world-wide religion with followers in dozens of countries; however, they do not make public their membership statistics, and practitioners are becoming more scarce (S. Gottschalk, 1987).

The success and survival of these religions makes them continually relevant to the American context. But at what price to the founding theologies and practices which

originally set them apart? How have the biopolitical practices of both groups adapted to their times? Some would argue that both churches have made social and theological accommodations in the last century in order to continue to exist in their political environment (Mauss, 1994). By forsaking polygamy, for example, or otherwise tempering their “peculiarity”,<sup>130</sup> both have also successfully achieved—at least in part—their visions of Zion in America. For their part, after their renunciation of the practice of polygamy, the LDS have enjoyed a more favorable relationship with the US government, which has allowed the Church to continue to grow and expand its mission and influence. And even though CS still ends up snatching headlines and receiving negative press from time to time, court cases are often found in favor of CS parents who use their best judgment to care for their children, rather than resort to medical science (“Florida Conviction of Christian Scientists Overturned,” 1992; Schoepflin, 2003).

At the same time, the spiritual/metaphysical ideal of Zion for both groups remains much the same as it was originally, and church members still continue to hope for the realization of Zion, if not in physical reality, then in all its spiritual significance: the peace and comfort that come from knowing that one is being led by God and God alone.<sup>131</sup> If Zion becomes more a state of being than an actual, geographically situated state, it is possible for individuals to benefit from Zion wherever they live. While the LDS still believe that even this interpretation of Zion must be a group effort (starting in

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<sup>130</sup> Armand Mauss, for one, would say this is true about the LDS (1994). He argues that the Church began to change some of its practice and culture in the late nineteenth century, in attempt to achieve statehood. However, he also believes that what he calls “assimilation” to mainstream American culture continued in the church until the mid-twentieth century—when the LDS ideology of the family was the same as the US ideal of the nuclear family. Since that time, he believes that Mormonism has attempted to regain some of its “peculiarity” through increased emphasis on temple worship, *The Book of Mormon*, and other uniquely LDS doctrines.

<sup>131</sup> Today, Zion is still a frequent subject of LDS meetings, even though its political quest for the kingdom of God appears to have been tabled. The current focus is on building Zion in one’s own home or congregation, with Zion defined as “the pure in heart” (D&C 97:21).

the family unit), Christian Scientists believe that the attainment of Zion may be an individual revelation. Because CS teaches that Zion is already present for those who are spiritually prepared to experience it, the desire for Zion ultimately cannot be curtailed by opposition from the courts or the state.

### *Politics of Body and Territory*

*Biopolitics.* This is not to say that either group has lost sight of its biopolitical theologies. Christian Scientists continue to face opposition in the popular media, and difficulties with state regulations and societal expectations for health care also remain. At the same time, their mental practice of spirituality continues to enact itself on the body, creating a new, consciously self-formed subject, as discussed in Chapter 5. The LDS church, on the other hand, practiced a curious biopolitical theology from the beginning—including polygamous marriages, large families, and a strong dedication to “material” wealth, economics, industry, and expansion. Although many of these practices are no longer part of the mainstream LDS experience, they hold continued significance in the cultural heritage of the church. What is more, other, less overt biopolitics appear to have taken their place: for example, strict guidelines for what to wear<sup>132</sup> and what to eat, and cultural norms that gender the body into specific maternal or patriarchal roles.

As previously mentioned, biopower is the power of a governor (religious or otherwise) to discipline the bodies of his membership. Bodies are made spiritually significant in both the CS and LDS faiths in various ways (although Christian Science rejects the reality of all matter, the basis of the faith is its healing power made manifest in

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<sup>132</sup> LDS members are admonished to wear modest clothing which covers the shoulders, stomach, and legs to the knee (low-cut or otherwise revealing clothing for men or women is also discouraged).

the individual body). In the CS, this mostly centers on the health and perceived well-being of the physical body. On the other hand, LDS biopolitics have encompassed a much wider perspective, including procreation and a spiritualized interest in all things material (including territory and economy). Gendered bodies also have special significance in CS and LDS theology and practice, as mentioned in Chapter Four. This is especially true of the LDS, who limit priesthood power and authority to worthy adult men, and who often glorify women in word but limit their sphere in practice. LDS theology also promotes a particular view of the family, propagation within marriage, and the role of men and women as essential and divinely appointed. In the case of both religions, biopower is both a temporal and a spiritual form of discipline which trains bodies to adhere to strict codes of morality and spiritually motivated care of the self.

In addition to their own particular biopolitics, both churches utilize specific forms of pastoral care, emphasizing the relationship of the sheep to the shepherd and the personal power of the pastor to guide his/her membership to greener spiritual or temporal pastures. As demonstrated in the preceding chapters, the pastor's role is to keep his sheep safe from harm—whether it is physical or metaphysical—and both the CS and LDS pastors take this role seriously. In the case of the CS, for example, the influence of the pastor is coupled with a psychiatric power which acts strictly on the mind of the individual church member, giving the governor (in this case, Eddy), complete control over the thoughts of her followers. This type of power also allows individual members to control their own thoughts and thereby re-imagine the structure of a fully spiritual reality. At the same time, this mental work also disciplines the body and helps to create a new subjectivity—one with a particularly “other worldly” perspective.

*Geopolitics.* While both Christian Science and the LDS church offer prime examples of the use of political power as spiritual governance, the theological significance of the political in the LDS makes it particularly interesting in its American context. The final portion of this work includes an in-depth study of the proposed (and realized) theo-democratic government of the LDS church in the nineteenth century. Chapter Six provides a history of some of the ways in which the LDS took up full responsibility for the temporal welfare of its saints/citizens. By acting against US government orders and resisting federal intervention into territorial affairs, the LDS believed they were preserving their sacred ideal of Zion. Eventually, however, the strain of self-sufficiency proved too great, and the LDS recognized that they were not fully capable of operating simultaneously both within the United States and against its laws. In reaction to this realization—that the Church must sacrifice in order to survive—the LDS began to make a series of accommodations (such as giving up the practice of polygamy) in a strategic attempt to survive and to preserve what was left of their ideal. While LDS attempts at self-government were ultimately defeated, current LDS teachings and behaviors suggest that their theological vision of Zion remains unscathed.

The idea of creating a religious government or organizing a new order for persons or territories within the US is significant because it suggests, first, that the group in question is not satisfied with the current political regime; and second, that authority and sovereignty must be redefined. Of course, the CS and LDS were not the only groups busy reinventing or re-imagining the ideal American life during the nineteenth century. However, their unique combinations of spiritual and temporal power, authority, and jurisdiction together with their particular histories as “outsiders” to the Protestant-

American experience make them particularly rich cases. This study of the CS and LDS provides a starting point for the analysis of deeply-seated theoretical issues such as the relationship between secular political power and the political power of belief.

The prospect of aligning the City of God within man's government has required much sacrifice on the part of the CS and LDS faithful. As mentioned previously, both churches have envisioned Zion as an achievable location, a real place to be found/founded through the efforts of the faithful. For the CS, this is a private, personal endeavor, because Zion to them is a metaphysical reality dependent on the viewpoint of the individual observer. In this way it becomes possible to be in the world but not of it (John 17:14), as one makes a conscious decision to accept the spiritual as the ultimate reality (thereby denying the so-called prominence of the physical/temporal/material world). Today, both religions continue to practice their founding theologies, striving for a social/political/spiritual Zion wherever they may be. In this way, they remain spiritually/metaphysically independent of the state, even as they are subject to its guidelines for acceptable physical demonstrations of belief.

### *Significance*

As the preceding arguments demonstrate, a Foucaultian analysis of the Christian Science and Latter-day Saint religions reveals that not only were they representative of intensely American moments in history, but their political interpretations of the body, mind, and spirit of their memberships, along with their specific strategies and tactics for governing them, remain significant today—largely for the kinds of questions they uncover regarding the proper avenues of governance and the place of religious life and practice as it shapes the lived realities of American citizens. Throughout this analysis, I

have allowed the particular political situations of both groups to suggest their own line of questioning, as Foucault recommends (Rabinow, 1997). Using a genealogical approach, I looked to the histories of both the CS and LDS, and with those histories uncovered various regimes of power which continue to govern the lives of CS and LDS faithful today. This method of exploration and inquiry has allowed me to let both religious movements speak for themselves and offer their own explanations of their various theologies of power. Through the voices of their own theologies, doctrines, and lived practice, the CS and LDS religious histories—situated in their historical contexts—speak of religious movements as political actors in the United States. Additionally, they speak of the contemporary conflict between freedom of belief and freedom of practice.

While considering these implications, it is also important to keep in mind that both religious groups may be considered as intensely American movements—first, for their alignment with popular nineteenth century Jacksonian and transcendental ideals such as freedom of the body, mind, and spirit, and second, for the ways that they have continued to keep themselves relevant to contemporary US ideologies such as freedom of choice (in health care and in sexual politics) and other overtly political debates (such as recent controversies surrounding Mitt Romney’s run for the presidency, or the FLDS raids in 2008). Although press isn’t always positive, both the CS and LDS remain centered at the crux of a number of political-personal debates which still trouble the hearts and minds of Americans. Primary among these, perhaps, is the conflict between an individual’s private morality and government laws concerning the proper treatment of the individual body [represented in CS cases of child health care and LDS cases of polygamy (historically) and defense of traditional marriage (currently)]. The theoretical

questions analyzed in this document also suggest a more general pragmatic conflict over policies such as abortion and gay marriage. The fundamental question posed by each of these problems is the same: in the everyday life of an individual, where does secular/state government end and spiritual/personal government begin?

It has been the intent of this study to examine such questions. Conflicts such as these further demonstrate the continued relevance of the CS and LDS religions in their broader American-political-private context today. What is more, this study is not a religious examination of the CS and LDS. Instead, it explores the particular ways these groups become politicized actors in the American scene through their various religious interpretations of governance, authority, and responsibility. The previous chapters suggest at least two critical findings: first, that religious belief itself acts as a form of political power and as such produces a particular type of individual; second, that the temporal and spiritual location of Zion is also a political presence within the physical/metaphysical borders of the United States. Furthermore, this work suggests new perspectives on the old story of politics and religion in the US, and by so doing, justifies a critical theoretical approach to the topic.

Finally, I began this dissertation with a personal disclosure of my own LDS faith. At the end of this study, I continue to believe that my personal experience as a member of the LDS church has given me the benefit of an insider's perspective which is complemented by my critical scholarly approach. Because of my intimate knowledge of LDS beliefs, practices, and resources for study, I have been able to put together what I believe is a thorough and well-rounded analysis of the faith. Additionally, my believer's standpoint has provided me with a starting point for my investigation of Christian

Science. Although the type of interpretation implemented in this analysis may have revealed an unconscious bias on my part (such as inspiring the kinds of questions I have asked and the specific avenues I have pursued), I continue to believe that my own recognition of the possibility of bias has encouraged me to redouble my efforts at truly understanding and appreciating the Christian Science faith as an insider would.

What is more, a close, critical analysis of my own religion has opened my eyes to a deeper appreciation for the underlying “truths” which I have taken for granted in my life. Among other things, I now better understand that questions of governance are never entirely absent from what one may assume are the most personal, spiritual, or otherwise private/protected areas of one’s life. An awareness of the various types of governing authorities which compete for interest in the minds, bodies, and spirits of US citizens can help any individual (religious or otherwise) to better understand the competing interests of authority, autonomy, and personal belief in everyday life. Such realizations, perhaps, are among the most important findings of this research, and inspire what promises to be a rich and fruitful path for further research.

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