

Council of the Twelve called it an inspired “course correction,” part of an overall effort to get back to basics (*Ensign* 10 [May 1990]:89–91). The metaphor could well be applied to much of what had happened since 1945.

Church members have generally accepted changes well, and have seen in them an opportunity for further spiritual growth. As a result, in 1990 the Church was moving more rapidly than ever before toward being able to accommodate diverse nationalities, language groups, and cultures. Church leaders continued to emphasize the traditional doctrines, but general conference addresses increasingly tended also to define Sainthood in terms of what Elder M. Russell Ballard characterized in April 1990, as the “small and simple things”: love, service, home, family, and worship of the Savior (*Ensign* 10 [May 1990]:6–8). These are among the universals that constitute the essence of what it means to be a Latter-day Saint.

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Much has been written about this period in professional journals. A few broad treatments are mentioned in the introduction to this history section. See also Spencer J. Palmer, *The Expanding Church* (Salt Lake City, 1978). For additional information, consult the bibliographies accompanying the biographies of Church Presidents who served during this period: George Albert Smith, David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, Spencer W. Kimball, and Ezra Taft Benson.

JAMES B. ALLEN  
RICHARD O. COWAN

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## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH (HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH)

The seven-volume history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints titled *History of the Church* covers less than two decades and might better be titled “The History of Joseph Smith.” It is the official history of the Church’s founding generation, still in print and still widely used. The motivation for compiling this early history was fourfold: (1) to obey a commandment of the Lord (D&C 21:1); (2) to preserve a record of the Church for later generations (see RECORD KEEPING); (3) to combat and correct ANTI-MORMON PUBLICATIONS; and (4) to provide a written record as a protection against false accusations and lawsuits (see SMITH, JOSEPH: TRIALS OF JOSEPH SMITH).

Although the responsibility for keeping a history of the Church was delegated to the Church recorder and historian, Joseph Smith was the prime motivator. He selected able men, gave them regular encouragement and instruction, and provided space for them in his home or store. Because of his lack of formal education, Joseph Smith depended on others to do most of the actual writing of both the sources and the completed history. More than two dozen scribes and writers are known to have assisted him.

After several early attempts, Joseph Smith and his clerk, James Mulholland, began this history at Commerce, Illinois, on June 10, 1839 (*HC* 3:375–77). Originally titled “The History of Joseph Smith,” it began with a first-person account of Joseph Smith’s early visions (see VISIONS OF JOSEPH SMITH), which had been written in the spring of 1838 (*HC* 3:25–26). Although little of the subsequent history was dictated or written by the Prophet himself, writers used his diaries where available and retained the first-person narrative style throughout.

A series of scribes, clerks, and Church historians labored sporadically on the history for nearly twenty years, through difficult periods of persecution, pioneer travel, and western colonization. Written as annals rather than narrative history, the manuscript version fills six large journals called the “Manuscript History of the Church.” Willard Richards, appointed as Joseph Smith’s “private Sect. & Historian” on December 21, 1842, compiled most of the history—over half after the death of Joseph Smith on June 27, 1844. With the assistance of his adopted son and clerk, Thomas Bullock, Richards completed the narrative to March 1, 1843, before his own death in 1854. It was left to George A. Smith, his successor as Church Historian, to compile the history of the MARTYRDOM OF JOSEPH AND HYRUM SMITH, expand notes of the Prophet’s sermons, and continue the narrative into August 1844, when Brigham YOUNG was sustained to lead the Church.

The Church published this history serially in its periodicals, first in the *TIMES AND SEASONS* at Nauvoo and then in Salt Lake City’s *DESERET NEWS* from 1852 to 1857. The seven-volume version published by the Church today is a product of the editing of B. H. Roberts of the Seventy, who worked intermittently on the project from 1902 to 1932. Because it quotes extensively from letters,

minutes, and diaries of the day, the *History of the Church* has often been referred to as the *Documentary History of the Church*, or *DHC*.

Emphasizing the role of God in human affairs, this history falls within the Judeo-Christian tradition of “providential history.” Because it was not written in a literary vacuum, it exhibits characteristics and flaws commonly found in the history and biography of its day: unacknowledged ghostwriting, edited sources, and a lack of balance. The most frequent distortion is the changing of an associate’s third-person description of Joseph Smith’s words and actions to a first-person account attributed to Joseph Smith, thereby conveying a false sense that he wrote it. Nonetheless, resting as it does on extensive documents from the period and compiled by persons who were eyewitnesses to the events, the factual content of the history has proven reliable.

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HOWARD C. SEARLE

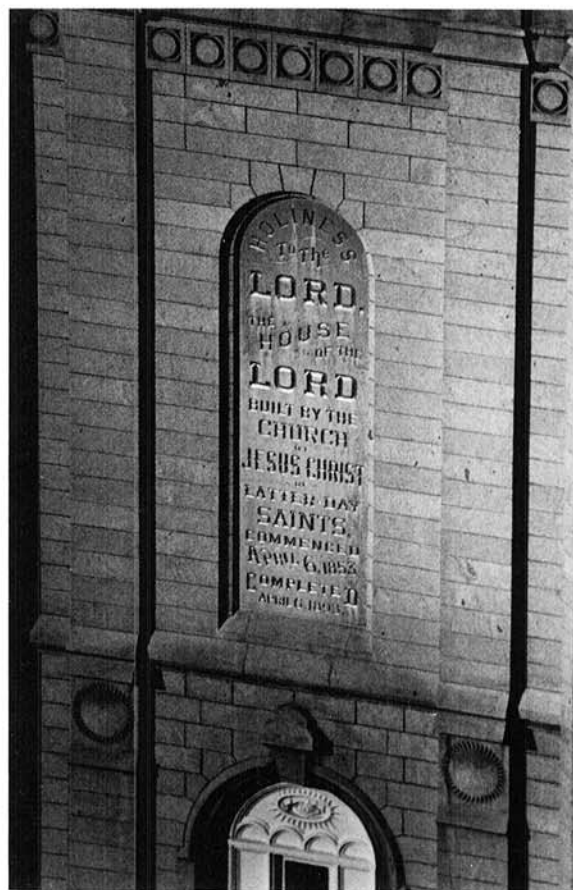
## HOLINESS

In LDS thought, as in most religions, it is God who invests a person, place, or object with holiness: “For I am able to make you holy, and your sins are forgiven you” (D&C 60:7). Thus the TEMPLES of the Church are said to be holy because they are dedicated to Deity who has manifested himself within them. Latter-day Saints speak of the SABBATH as holy because God has put his spirit into that day. The wooded area where Joseph SMITH received his FIRST VISION is spoken of as the SACRED GROVE because the Father and the Son appeared there. Marriage and other priesthood ORDINANCES are considered holy because God is directly and personally a party to such covenants. The scriptures are holy because they contain the word of God.

Although they infrequently use the term “holy” (an exception is in a beloved hymn which beseeches God, “More holiness give me”), Latter-

day Saints strive for a measure of holiness and PERFECTION in MORTALITY: “Man may be perfect in his sphere; . . . individual perfection is relative. . . . The law of the Gospel is a perfect law and the sure effect of full obedience thereto is perfection” (Talmage, p. 169).

The process of becoming holy is based on three doctrines: JUSTIFICATION, which satisfies the demands of justice for the sins of the individual through the ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST; purification, made possible by that same atonement and symbolized in the SACRAMENT of the bread and water, requiring the constant cleansing of oneself from earthly stains and imperfections; and SANCTIFICATION, the process of being made holy. Having



The eastern face of the Salt Lake Temple and of each LDS temple bears the inscription, “Holiness to the Lord.” The phrase also appeared on doorknobs and other articles of daily use in Nauvoo and pioneer Utah, reflecting the prophecy in Zech. 14:20–21 that “in that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD . . . Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.”