

members in photocopy form in May 1974. By March 1975, the Church had fifteen missionaries and more than three thousand Vietnamese members. At that point the missionaries were withdrawn, and a month later, Saigon fell. Almost all of the LDS members eventually left Vietnam and migrated to the United States.

CHURCH GROWTH IN INDIA AND SRI LANKA. India and Sri Lanka have laws prohibiting proselytizing by foreigners, and the Church respects those laws. Most of the growth within India and Sri Lanka has been the result of efforts of local members who have conveyed the gospel message to their friends. For example, in 1965, S. Paul Thiruthuvadoss was baptized after an individual search for the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was briefly assisted by foreign missionaries, and his efforts resulted in the baptism of more than two hundred Tamil-speaking South Indians.

In December 1978, Edwin Dharmaraju and his wife, both of whom had been baptized in Western Samoa, served a short mission in their home city of Hyderabad, India. Before returning to Samoa, Dharmaraju baptized twenty-two family members, ordained four men to the Aaronic Priesthood, and organized a group of the Church. Also, Sister Dharmaraju's father, a Baptist minister, had found such interest in the Book of Mormon that he translated it into the Telugu language (48 million speakers). It was published in 1982, as was the complete Hindi (175 million speakers) version and selections in Tamil (42 million speakers). Bengali (48 million speakers) selections of the Book of Mormon were published in 1985.

Another important Indian missionary was Raj Kumar, who strengthened new members and branches as they were established. By 1986 local missionaries were serving full-time missions for the Church in India and Sri Lanka, assisted by North American friendship-missionary couples sent from the Singapore Mission to make friends for the Church in various cities. They and other expatriates, such as business and government personnel stationed in India, did not proselytize, but answered questions and taught the gospel to those who sought them out.

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R. LANIER BRITSCHE

ASSISTANTS TO THE TWELVE

In 1941 five men were called as Assistants to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency explained at the conference that they had been called because of the rapid growth of the Church and the ever-expanding demands upon the Quorum of the Twelve. A total of thirty-eight men served the Church as Assistants to the Twelve before the office was merged with the SEVENTY in 1976.

As General Authorities, Assistants to the Twelve had the authority to minister throughout the Church and to fulfill assignments as directed by the Quorum of the Twelve. They presided over, and spoke at, stake conferences; helped organize stakes; toured missions; and directed missionary work in many parts of the world.

A number of men who first served as Assistants to the Twelve were later called to be members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: George Q. Morris, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, and Joseph B. Wirthlin. Several others who had served as Assistants to the Twelve also served in the Quorum of the Twelve and later as Counselors in the First Presidency, including Hugh B. Brown, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney, and Gordon B. Hinckley.

An important 1835 revelation on priesthood describes the Seventy as the quorum standing next in authority to the Twelve, and under their direction, the Seventy share responsibility for the Church throughout the world (D&C 107:25-26, 33-34). According to President Spencer W. KIMBALL in 1976, the calling of the Assistants was "similar to that envisioned by the revelations for the First Quorum of Seventy," but "the scope and demands of the work at that time [1941]" did not yet justify the reconstitution of that quorum (p. 9).

After accelerating growth in many parts of the world led to the organization of the First Quorum of Seventy in 1975, the nearly two dozen Assistants then serving became members of that quorum in 1976.

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BYRON R. MERRILL

ASTRONOMY, SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES TO

Latter-day Saint scriptures indicate that both biblical and latter-day prophets and seers were shown visions of the heavenly realms to orient them to God's dominion and eternal purposes. These visions gave information about (1) the governing of systems of WORLDS and stellar objects; (2) a heliocentric, planetary cosmology; (3) the plurality of worlds; (4) the spiritual and physical CREATION of the EARTH and the universe; and (5) the role of Jesus Christ as creator.

The BOOK OF ABRAHAM states that God's physical dominion (throne) is located near a star called Kolob (Abr. 3:2–3). While it might seem reasonable to suppose that this refers to some distinguishing feature of the universe, all efforts to identify it are speculative and not authoritative. Wherever Kolob is located, its purpose is to "govern" all planets that are of the same "order" as the Earth (Abr. 3:9). Since ABRAHAM says no more than that, it is not clear whether he is speaking physically, metaphorically, or allegorically. Thus, "to govern" might mean a physical bonding as with gravity, while "order" could conceivably mean planets similar to the Earth in size, or planets in the same region of this galaxy or even in the entire Milky Way galaxy. Kolob was also said by the Egyptians to provide the light for all stars, including that for our sun (Abr. Facsimile 2). Even so, Latter-day Saints have made no definitive comment on the meaning of these passages.

In contrast to some interpretations of biblical scholars who attribute a geocentric cosmology to the words of Joshua (10:12–14), Job (9:6–7), Isaiah (38:7–8), and other Old Testament passages, the

Book of Mormon affirms the sun-centered (heliocentric) view accepted by modern planetary physics. The prophets Nephi₂ (Hel. 12:13–15) and Alma₂ agree that "surely it is the earth that moveth and not the sun" (Alma 30:44).

Psalm 8:3–4 has been the classic text for discussion of the "plurality of worlds." LDS scriptures give even more direct support for modern astronomers' search for extraterrestrial intelligence. The prophets Enoch, Moses, and Joseph Smith all received revelations dealing with the existence of sentient life on other planets. Moses revealed both the spatial and temporal existence of countless worlds: that God had created "worlds without number," that "many worlds. . . have [already] passed away," and that other worlds are yet to be created (Moses 1:33–38). Joseph Smith received revelations explaining that through Jesus Christ these worlds are created and inhabited (D&C 76:22–24; 93:9–10; Moses 1:33), that all kingdoms are bound by certain LAWS and conditions (D&C 88:36–38, 42–47), and that resurrected beings reside on celestialized planets (D&C 130:4–7).

The various creation accounts in LDS scripture outline a spirit creation of the heavens and the earth that preceded the physical creation, thus affirming the spiritual nature of the cosmos (Moses 2–3; Abr. 4–5); spirit is indeed "matter" of a different order (D&C 131:7–8). While Moses calls creation periods "days," Abraham speaks of "times" and of thousand-year days (Abr. 3:4; 5:13), suggesting a complex physical creation process.

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ERICH ROBERT PAUL

ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST

The atonement of Jesus Christ is the foreordained but voluntary act of the Only Begotten Son of God. He offered his life, including his innocent body, blood, and spiritual anguish as a redeeming ransom (1) for the effect of the fall of Adam upon all