

volved and is not just the responsibility of the one who feels hurt or angry. The nature of the reconciliation depends upon the specifics of each situation. Rather than relying on human understanding or formulaic solutions, the Saints are taught to seek divine counsel and to trust the direction of the Lord, the reconciler of all (Prov. 3:5–6; D&C 112:10).

Standing in the way of most solutions to contention is pride: “Only by pride cometh contention” (Prov. 13:10). “The central feature of pride,” declared Ezra Taft BENSON, “is enmity—enmity toward God and . . . [toward] our fellowmen.” Underlying the solution to contention must be the desire for harmony between people which can come only as a person “yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit . . . and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19). Atonement and reconciliation with God allow and evoke forgiveness and reconciliation among people.

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Edited and published independently by Junius F. WELLS, the founder of the Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA; renamed YOUNG MEN in 1977), the *Contributor* (1879–1896) proposed “to represent the Mutual Improvement Associations, and to furnish a publication of peculiar interest to their members and to the mature youth of our people” (“Salutation,” p. 12). One of its purposes was to encourage and foster the development of literary talents among the young men and young women in the Church. It contained articles on such subjects as travel, philosophy, history, biography, and gospel topics. There were also letters from the General Authorities, conference reports, lesson outlines for the youth weekly meetings, hymns, fiction, and a little poetry.

The Contributor Company was formed on January 11, 1886, and Wells continued as editor,

publisher, and business manager. But when it was purchased by the Cannon Publishing Company in 1892, Abraham H. Cannon became the editor and publisher. Cannon died suddenly in July 1896, and the *Contributor* ceased publication with the October issue.

In November 1897 the general board of the YMMIA launched an official magazine, the IMPROVEMENT ERA (1897–1970).

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CONVERSION

From its beginnings to the present day, the Church has had a strong missionary orientation. It teaches that conversion is essentially a process of REPENTANCE and personal spiritual experience (*see* TESTIMONY; RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE; JOINING THE CHURCH).

THE NATURE OF CONVERSION. A number of theories have been advanced by sociologists to explain why people are likely to convert to another religious denomination. Glenn M. Vernon indicated that conversion involves several subprocesses, which must be accounted for, including (1) the manner in which the convert becomes aware of the group possessing the ideology; (2) the acceptance of new religious definitions; and (3) the integration of the new convert into the group. John Lofland and Rodney Stark proposed that conversion is a problem-solving process in which the individual uses organizational facilities, programs, and ideologies to resolve various life problems. More recently, David A. Snow, Louis A. Zurcher, and Sheldon Ekland-Olson have emphasized structural proximity, availability, and affective interaction with members of the new denomination as the most powerful influences in determining who will join. Roger A. Straus has proposed that religious conversion is an active accomplishment by the person who converts. Straus thinks that previous theories focus too heavily on the idea that conversion is something which happens to a person as a result of circumstances external to himself. Similarly, C.