The sixties taught a generation to question authority and the benevolence of those in power. The Church's response was to stonewall, deny, and reject calls for change. As a result, the Church entered the 1970s and proceeded through the 1980s with management and control as high items on its agenda.

CHANGE AND GROWTH: THE MORMON CHURCH & THE 1960S

By Jeffery O. Johnson

ON 7 MARCH 1965, ABOUT THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE met at the Federal Building in Salt Lake City and marched a block and a half to the LDS Church Administration Building. Protest demonstrations and marches were common pressure devices used in the 1960s to urge social change; but this was the first to pressure the LDS church. Organized by black Utahns and liberal whites, many of them students and faculty from the University of Utah, it directly challenged Mormon internal affairs from outsiders.[1] It brought Utah and Mormonism into the nationwide turbulence over civil rights, challenged the trend of positive publicity that had been growing steadily for this prosperous, patriotic, politically conservative church, and would leave the Church in the 1970s out of touch with the mainstream of American social thought and increasingly on the defensive about its racial and—in the 1980s—gender policies.

This personal essay is an overview of the stresses that the LDS church encountered as the larger American society underwent rapid and devastating social changes.

The demonstrators demanded that Church leaders actively support civil rights legislation then pending in the state legislature. A few days earlier, NAACP leaders had met with Elders Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner, counselors in First Presidency, asking them to support these bills. The civil rights leaders felt that they had received assurances of support from the Church leaders; but the public statements of support did not come and the legislation seemed doomed. The demonstrators decided to act. Steve Holbrook, a student activist, had spent the previous summer of 1964 registering blacks to vote in Mississippi, a highly successful though violence-marred experience that had trained dozens of dedicated civil rights supporters in the tactics of social activism.

Although President Brown's sympathies are now well known, he then resisted yielding to pressure. Some Church leaders misunderstood the goal of the demonstration and thought the NAACP was pressuring the Church to change its policy of not ordaining black men to the priesthood. Senior apostle Spencer W. Kimball, who later as president of the Church enunciated the policy that lifted the priesthood ban in 1978, expressed resistance in 1963 saying that the Church practice in relation to holding the priesthood could not be changed just to respond to human wishes.[2] The Church was officially silent during the three-day demonstration in which activists prayed, made speeches, sang "We Shall Overcome," and displayed a large sign that read: "LDS Leaders, Use Your Influence for Moral Justice."

The demonstration ended on the day that the Church-owned *Deseret News* published an editorial quoting a statement of general support for civil rights that President Brown had made eighteen months earlier in the October 1963 general conference. Three days later, the state legislature passed the public accommodations measure and the fair employment act; a housing bill died in committee.[3]

For many civil rights sympathizers, the Church's statement was a grudging concession that was yielded under pressure. For many Mormons, the nightmare of civil rights conflict had moved off the television screen into their homes and streets.

Utah's Democratic governor, Calvin L. Rampton, had proposed the civil rights legislation after Lyndon B. Johnson had made it a Democratic Party priority when he was elected in November 1964. However, the atmosphere in the state was tense and paranoid. I was a student at BYU at the time and recall persistent rumors before each general conference that blacks were converging on Salt Lake City to take over the temple. When bombs damaged the east doors of the temple in November 1962, many Mormons associated this incident with the violence of the nation's racial strife.

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THE CHURCH'S INTERNAL STRESSES

A faltering presidency, explosive growth, and the correlation movement absorbed the Church's attention in the 1960s.

IN retrospect, a clash probably could not have been avoided. The Church apparently had no policy for dealing with the social issues that swirled through the nation except for dogged resistance and reluctant concessions, an approach that robbed even the concessions of some positive effects.

This intense conservatism was caused in part by the lack of strong Church presidential leadership, the Church's explosive growth, and the reorganization of the Church bureaucracy, known as the correlation movement. These events created internal stresses within the Church hierarchy.

After 130 years of personal management, Church leaders no longer knew local leaders personally and could no longer rely on first-hand observations of local conditions. They must have felt that their control was slipping away.

The weakening Church leadership was perhaps the most important. On 8 September 1960, eighty-seven-year-old President David O. McKay had been a general authority for fifty-five years, had been president for ten, and would continue in that office for another ten. His two most recent counselors had died in the early sixties—J. Reuben Clark on 6 October 1961 at the age of ninety, and Henry D. Moyle died 18 September 1963 at age of seventy-four. Elder Hugh B. Brown, who had been an apostle for only three years, replaced President Clark. Elder Brown's nephew, N. Eldon Tanner, who had been an apostle for one year, replaced President Moyle. Both men had spent their formative years and much of their professional lives in Canada.[4]

Six weeks after President Tanner was called on 12 November 1963, President McKay was hospitalized with a stroke. Although he survived, his speech and energy were severely curtailed; Church management largely fell into the hands of Presidents Brown and Tanner. By comparison with the other members of the Quorum of the Twelve, ten of whom had served longer than either of them, these two counselors in the First Presidency were inexperienced outsiders. President Tanner assumed the Church's financial and business affairs. In an interview with G. Homer Durham soon after he was called, President Tanner said that he felt "greatly handicapped in my present position. I have had no background, experience, or knowledge with the people that the others in Salt Lake City have had."[5] It seems reasonable to conclude that the other members of the Twelve may have had some reservations about their leadership as well.

Then, intensifying the internal stress and to everyone's surprise, President McKay added three more counselors: Thorpe B. Isaacson, then an assistant to the Twelve, on 28 October 1965; followed one day later by Joseph Fielding Smith, president of the Quorum of the Twelve and McKay's successor; and three years later by Alvin R. Dyer, also an assistant to the Twelve, but ordained an apostle by McKay the year before.[6] It is unclear what role President McKay had in mind for these unconventional appointments. When I began working at the Church Administration Building in 1969, Church employees had many stories about conflicts between Elders Isaacson and Dyer and the other counselors.

Another source of stress was the Church's rapid growth. Membership grew from 1.6 million in 1960 to 2.6 million in 1970. Though these totals seem small compared to 9 million in 1994, this almost doubling in one decade strained Church resources. Joseph Fielding Smith, as president of the Quorum of the Twelve, expressed his concern in a journal entry in August 1962: "Our spending everywhere is to me alarming, but I have nothing to say [about it]. . . . The Church is spending enormous sums in building all over the world. We are constantly creating stakes in Europe, the islands of the Pacific, and on the American continent." While this point was well taken, he then added a statement that revealed profound theological conservatism: "I wonder if we have forgotten the commandment to gather. To come to Zion."[7] Gathering to Zion had not been an official policy since the nineteenth century and had been actively discouraged since 1912.

President Tanner, when he was called in 1963, found that the building program had so drained Church reserves that financial officers wondered, at one point, if they could meet the employee payroll. He promptly declared a moratorium on building and investments until reserves reached a more comfortable level; he also established procedural controls over approving expenditures.

Furthermore, growth distanced Church leaders from members. After 130 years of personal management, Church leaders at headquarters no longer knew local leaders personally and could no longer rely on first-hand observations of local conditions. They must have felt that their control was slipping away. The calling of sixty-nine men to be regional representatives in October 1967 eased the administrative burdens, but inserted another layer in Church bureaucracy.[8]

An added stress point was the priesthood correlation movement, an attempt to streamline internal operations and maintain control. Church departments, many of them staffed by semi-autonomous professionals, were scattered throughout Salt Lake City overseeing legal, financial, purchasing, person-

nel, missionary, construction, welfare, and educational matters.

On 24 March 1960, the First Presidency wrote a letter to the general priesthood committee asking it to study a way of coordinating the Church's teaching material, then being produced by each auxiliary at the general level. Committee chair Harold B. Lee had wanted to reorganize the Church's administrative structure for many years. As a young apostle he had tried to make changes, but "found it necessary to fold away his charts of reorganization, changing job descriptions, and wait out the delay."[9]

With this commission, Elder Lee and the committee had the authority to suggest changes in Church structure. It seems to me that the First Presidency had only asked them to look at Church curriculum, but by the end of the sixties this committee had changed Church structure. By the time the dust had settled, auxiliaries had been stripped of magazines, curriculum-writing powers, and the right to raise their own funds and establish their own budgets. Women were not represented on the committees that pushed through these changes and although these actions applied to all auxiliaries, women's roles, responsibilities, and powers were curtailed as a group while men's, as priesthood holders, were not. This constriction affected not only the Relief Society, the YWMIA, and the Primary, but also broader services like welfare, which would be professionalized by male-managed departments. Other programs also were reshuffled and reorganized.[10] Apostle Spencer W. Kimball wrote painfully in his diary during the fall of 1969 that President Brown had singled out his "devotion and service," but that this "praise" was actually meant to soften the blow of shifting the Indian Student Placement Program away from his control to the control of the Welfare Services Department.[11]

Thus, these three internal stresses — a faltering of presidential leadership, the Church's explosive growth, and the divisiveness represented by the correlation movement—absorbed the Church's attention during a decade when the larger American social problems were no longer waiting patiently on the sidelines.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Civil rights, the Vietnam War, and the counter-culture movement caused the Church to stiffen its policies and dig in its heals.

FROM the perspective of more than twenty years, it seems clear that three factors greatly impacted the social fabric of the United States during the sixties: civil rights, the Vietnam War, and a strong youth counter-culture.

The civil rights movement, the crest of a wave of idealism that had begun at the end of World War II, carried John F. Kennedy into office and raised the hopes of black leaders for equality. The struggle exposed the racism and materialism underlying the idealistic American myth.

The 1965 demonstration at the Church Administration Building was not the first move toward more equality for Utah blacks. Two years earlier, a similar demonstration had been planned to coincide with October general conference. Sterling McMurrin, a philosophy professor at the University of Utah, arranged a meeting between Steve Holbrook, the student leader, Albert Fritz, president of the Salt Lake Chapter of the NAACP, University of Utah professor Charles Nabors, and Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner. At that point, Presidents Brown and Tanner agreed to make a strong statement of support for civil rights at general conference and the demonstration was canceled.[12]

> The sixties taught a generation to question authority. The Church rejected calls for change. But well-educated Mormons, committed to their church, could not sucessfully compartmentalize their social and religious experiences.

I remember hearing President Brown read this statement on that Sunday morning. It said in part: "There is in this Church no doctrine, belief, or practice that is intended to deny the enjoyment of full civil rights by any person regardless of race, color, or creed. . . . We call upon all men everywhere, both within and outside the Church, to commit themselves to the establishment of full civil equality for all of God's children. Anything less than this defeats our high ideal of the brotherhood of man."[13] It was this statement, reprinted in the *Deseret News*, that ended the demonstration in 1965 and assured passage of Utah's civil rights legislation.[14]

At that time, I greatly appreciated this statement and felt that it had effect on many Mormons. A woman from Georgia told me in 1965 that she would be prejudiced toward blacks if she weren't a Mormon. I was surprised because I had assumed that she would be prejudiced toward blacks because she *was* a Mormon.

Again on 15 December 1969, Presidents Brown and Tanner, acting as the First Presidency, made some effort to separate the issue of priesthood exclusion from civil rights: "The position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affecting those of the Negro race who choose to join the Church falls wholly within the category of religion. It has no bearing upon matters of civil rights. In no case or degree does it deny to the Negro his full privileges as a citizen of the nation. . . ."[15] This statement did not, however, solve the problem. Many Mor-

mons found inconsistencies in attempting to maintain the ideal of full political and social equality, but practicing religious discrimination in not giving priesthood rights to black men.

Conservative Mormons, meanwhile, buttressed their positions with criticism about the methods of civil rights activism. The *Improvement Era* published an article by G. Homer Durham, then president of Arizona State University and a future general authority, blasting sitdowns and building takeovers: "If not illegal under present law," he wrote, then they "should be carefully legislated against."[16] This group was particularly outraged when some schools took action against BYU for its suspected discrimination.

In December 1969, Stanford University severed relations with BYU over the Church's exclusion of blacks from the priesthood. In January and February, protestors at BYU basketball games disrupted the activities.[17] I particularly remember seeing black armbands on the Wyoming players at a BYU–University of Wyoming game. In short, the nation as a whole was under pressure from a group of citizens insisting the government make good the Founding Fathers' promise. The Church received its share of pressure, but, stiffened by a policy that had acquired the status of theology and doctrine, dug in its heels.

The second great social issue of the 1960s was the Vietnam War. After the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964, the steady acceleration of the war drew protests that employed the confrontational tactics of the civil rights movement. Anti-War protests began at the University of Michigan, but soon spread to campuses all over the United States.

BYU's ultra-conservative president, Ernest L. Wilkinson, had no intention of letting his school join the movement. As fall semester commenced in 1965, he instructed the dean of students to "look out" for protest tendencies "so that we can nip [them] in the bud. . . ."[18] It was not until late 1968 that BYU had its first major political demonstration: about sixty students wearing black armbands attempted to disrupt a speech by Curtis LeMay, the conservative running mate of third-party U.S. presidential candidate George Wallace. In March 1969, the Free Student Coalition presented BYU's administration with a list of demands including recognition for a student Mobilization for Peace Club, abolishing ROTC class credit, and the establishment of a Civil Rights Week.[19] The administration disregarded these demands.

As with the civil rights issue, conservative Mormons found support in quasi-theological roots—its opposition to Communism. Church President Heber J. Grant had issued an anti-Communist statement in 1936, which became the standard Church position on Communism.[20] During the 1950s, the Church leaders continued this opposition. In 1960, David O. McKay, speaking to the BYU students, denounced Marx and Lenin and concluded his speech with, "I pray with an earnest heart, God keep you away from the low, seeking, scheming plans of him who enthrones passion, who decries self-control, who renounces the sacredness of the family—and who, in the words of Marx himself, would 'dethrone God.' "[21] I fully absorbed this alarm and spent half an hour as a youth sacrament meeting speaker in 1961 warning the congregation against the evils of Communism.

The transfer from anti-Communism to pro-Vietnam War was a simple one. Church officials announced in December 1965: "Latter-day Saints are not pacifists in the accepted definition of that term. Neither are they conscientious objectors."[22] During that year, the Church limited missionary calls to make more Mormon men available for the draft.

The third major social movement of the 1960s was the rise of a strong youth counter-culture. Stemming from the questioning of authority that emerged from the civil rights and anti-war movements, students at various universities went beyond politics and social justice to alternative life styles that rejected the social norms of the older generation. The "Pill" seemed to promise consequence-free sex; drugs became easily available for recreational use; and rock music developed new musical forms that challenged tradition.

Longer hair, beards, Eastern religions, and unconventional clothing were part of the times. Writer Fred Voros recalled, "Life seemed to bristle with excitement and meaning, with the promise of a new kind of idealism, rejecting hypocritical materialism and embracing love, tolerance, justice, and poetic living. We lived in a neo-renaissance of kaleidoscopic lights, brightly colored clothing, intoxicating incense, sitar music, and social awakening."[23]

Mormon leaders responded promptly and predictably by holding firm against the counter-culture. The beard-growing contest that had long been a tradition at Ricks College stopped, a friend of mine recalls. BYU created and vigorously enforced an Honor Code that dedicated little space on "honor" and more space devoted to haircuts, sideburn length, skirt measurements, and the disapproval of bluejeans.

Rock music was generally considered evil, and the muted struggle between teenagers bored with traditional music and stake leaders responsible for excluding "questionable" music formed a large item of the youth-adult agenda in the Church. A whole article could be devoted to the Church's increasingly detailed advice about performers, lyrics, style of singing, and beat. The December 1965 *Priesthood Bulletin* quoted Brigham Young: "If we are dancing properly, a priesthood bearer could walk off the dance floor, administer to the sick in a proper way, and feel good about it."[24] With some amusement I recalled that Brigham Young was denouncing "round dances," like the waltz, as licentious and sensual, and now they were being urged upon us as the height of proper dancing.

The Church's position on dating and marriage deepened and intensified. In January 1960, the Church began broadcasting radio firesides that were sent to the stakes as records. During my middle teens, these firesides formed my image of "correct" male/female relations. Ezra Taft Benson summarized this view in 1964: "Avoid late hours; dress modestly; seek good associates; avoid necking and petting; have a good physical outlet; think good thoughts [and] pray."[25] The middle-class images of marriage that Americans absorbed from television of Ozzie and Harriet Nelson or the Cleaver family were reinforced for Mormons by the ideally romantic relationship of David and

Emma Ray McKay. Much was made of the fact that, even when they were both in wheelchairs, Sister McKay always preceded President McKay through a doorway.

CONCLUSION

In the 1990s, will the Church overcome its dichotomous legacy from the 1960s?

IT is tempting to speculate on what might have happened inside the Church if none of these social changes had occurred on the broader national scene. If the prosperous, materialistic, patriotic fifties had continued unchecked, would the Church have continued to be even more "respectable" and mainstream? Possibly, but that did not happen. The sixties taught a generation to question authority and the benevolence of those in power. It taught a willingness to sacrifice one's own interests to protect the interests of voiceless minorities. Intelligent and well-educated Mormons, committed to their Church, could not successfully compartmentalize their social and religious experiences. Furthermore, the success of the protests empowered many previously marginalized groups to bring about social change.

The Church's response was to stonewall, deny, and reject calls for change. It was more successful in remaining conservative and in retaining its tradition than many other aspects of the larger American society. Apostle Boyd K. Packer told BYU students in his 23 March 1965 address that his whole message could be summed up in three simple words: "Follow the Brethren."[26] But it was this message that threw the conflict between the Church and society into bold relief during the 1960s. As a result, the Church entered the 1970s and proceeded through the 1980s with management and control as high items on its agenda. It will be interesting to see if in the 1990s the Church can come to grips with this dichotomy.

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SILENCE IN URSA MAJOR

The brightest stars look over her,
light her empty page
but do not write upon it.
They hover above her, barristral—waiting
as hung muses do, mute
to her probings, her delving
for some moment
of their startling brilliance.

The whites of their purest absolution
wink enthroned above her reach:
were they only diamonds,
she could have their crystal glare
wrapped in less-glittering orbs
around her finger;
but—as oculi mundi,
their sharp, diaphanous stares
are at a distance
almost merciful.

For this bare moment,
until her restitution,
they must remain
the only fire
in the night.

—VIRGINIA ELLEN BAKER