

*If Mormonism is to develop into a more outward-reaching, embracing religion,  
a more open temple may be a key element of that transformation.*

# THOUGHTS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF AN OPEN TEMPLE<sup>1</sup>

*By Todd Compton*

I FIRST BEGAN THINKING ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF an open temple after Steve Epperson was terminated at Brigham Young University when his bishop denied him a temple recommend.<sup>2</sup> As I understand the situation, Epperson's bishop, Andrew Clark, refused him the recommend for two reasons. First, though Steve attended sacrament meeting in his home ward, he did not attend Sunday School or priesthood meeting there. In an effort to keep his family involved in religious activity, Epperson was participating in a service program to feed the homeless in Salt Lake City, and this program's time conflicted with those of Sunday School and priesthood. Steve offered to attend those two meetings in another ward, but Bishop Clark would not accept this offer. Second, Epperson missed some months of paying tithing (again, there were family considerations), and his offer to start again when family difficulties had been resolved was also rejected by his bishop.

BYU administrators, meanwhile, had been investigating Epperson for writings they considered unorthodox. (His book on Mormon/Jewish relations, *Mormon and Jews: Early Mormon Theologies of Israel* [published in 1992, before Epperson was hired by BYU] had evidently displeased some Church leaders even though it did not cover any obviously controversial issues such as abortion or feminism.) When Epperson and his bishop began having difficulties, BYU, rather than act as mediator, simply terminated Epperson. I don't know whether the heresy investigation caused BYU administrators to accept the bishop's judgment without mediation, which they might have otherwise attempted, or whether the investigation was entirely incidental.

The Epperson case can be viewed from at least two perspectives. First, from the perspective of strict justice, one might argue that since Epperson failed to fulfill the technical require-

ments of a temple recommend, he should be willing to pay the consequences. BYU, from this perspective, was simply carrying out a publicly stated policy. Second, from the perspective of mercy and compassion, one might argue that firing a person because he missed Sunday School and priesthood meetings in his home ward, especially considering the fact his absence was related to family unity and not simply laziness, was a punishment not commensurate with the offense, and that a compassionate bishop might have tried to help Epperson somehow. In the question of tithing, one might argue that repentance should be factored into the case. But weighing the respective claims of mercy and strict justice is never easy.

One of the possible, positive developments from the tragic Epperson termination might be a re-evaluation of what could be called the closed-temple/temple recommend tradition. Excluding non-Mormons and "less-active" Mormons from temples, and using temple recommends to that effect, are deep-seated in modern Mormon culture. I was surprised, then, when I began looking at early Mormon history and Jesus' teachings in the Gospels and finding that the "closed temple" is not clearly and unambiguously supported.<sup>3</sup>

## THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

*A nation of lay "priesthood holders."*

CONSIDER Luke 18:9-14:<sup>4</sup>

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt. Two men went up to the temple [*tò hieròn*] to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector [*telones*]. The Pharisee, standing by himself [*stathèis pròs heautòn*], was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, evildoers,<sup>5</sup> adulterers [*hàrpages, àdikoi, moikhoi*], or even like this tax collector. I fast [*nesteúo*] twice a week; I give a tenth of all my in-

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come.” But the tax collector, standing far off [makróthen], would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” [Ho theós, hilásthēti moi hamartoloi.] I tell you, this man [the tax collector] went down to his home justified [katébe hoútōs dedikaioménos eis tōn oíkon autoū] rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.

To understand this story, we need a brief introduction to the Pharisee movement. Pharisees are portrayed in the Gospels in a one-dimensional, negative way.<sup>6</sup> There were excesses in their movement, but it is important that we see the Pharisees as human beings with strengths as well as weaknesses, and recognize that the movement was complex. There were currents of Pharisaism more interested in loving God and fellow men than in legalistic hair-splitting.<sup>7</sup> But there were extremists among them, and the Gospels’ portrait of the Pharisees is accurate in its depiction of legalistic extremism. Still, it is crucial to recognize that many of the Pharisees were not blatantly, hatefully judgmental.

In fact, even the extremist faction started as sincere religious seekers with the admirable goal of trying to recover the purity of the Law, the books of Moses, in a time of encroaching secularism. To do this, they returned to a strict observance of the Law, at a time when many Jews had become Hellenized or Romanized and had forgotten the revelations of the Old Testament.

The word Pharisee, according to one interpretation, comes from a Semitic root for “separate.” In other words, the Pharisees (“the separated ones”) strove to separate themselves from the sins and sinners of the world.<sup>8</sup> They were a renewal movement. Israel had been conquered and ruled by the Macedonian Greeks, and pressure was put on the Jewish culture to become Hellenized—to speak Greek, have Greek names, tolerate or even practice Greek religion, associate and

eat with Greeks. Later, the Romans also conquered the region, but they, too, were a Hellenized culture, practicing a similar form of polytheistic paganism. Again, the conquerors pressured the Jews to become more Gentile-like.

The Pharisees organized to stop this rampant secularization. They read the Law carefully (thus Jesus called them “lawyers”) and practiced its ritual codes precisely.<sup>9</sup> They deplored the secularization and politicization of the temple priesthood in Jerusalem, and they themselves lived by the temple priests’ purity code.<sup>10</sup> One modern interpreter of the Pharisees, Jacob Neusner, views them as “lay priests”—striving to extend the purity of the temple priesthood, with its code of ritual purity, to everyone in Israel.<sup>11</sup> Mormons will relate to this goal, for the Mormon ideal is that “all worthy males” above the age of twelve should hold priesthood. While it excludes “worthy females” from the priesthood, Mormonism still has more of a lay priesthood system than, say, a system with a congregation of non-priests/ministers and one priest/minister.

Just as priests in Israel lived according to laws of ritual purity more elaborate than those imposed on common people,<sup>12</sup> so the laws of ritual purity became central for the Pharisees with their ideal of a lay priesthood.<sup>13</sup>

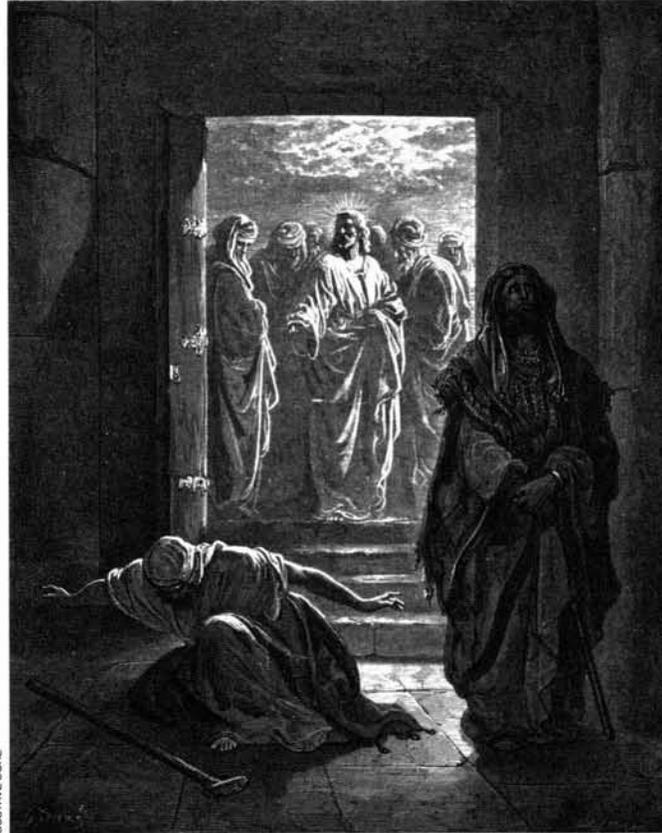
This ideal has some justification in the Old Testament: “But you shall be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”

(Ex. 19:6). “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (Lev. 11:45), which reminds us of Jesus’ “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

#### CONTINUITIES BETWEEN JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

*Was Jesus one of them?*

**T**O temper the overly negative view of Pharisees in the Gospels, we should note that there were many continuities between Jesus and the Pharisees. In fact, some scholars have interpreted Jesus as a kind of Pharisee, since he was the leader of a Jewish renewal movement based on an in-



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#### THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

*Jesus says explicitly that this tithe payer, this sexually pure, ritually observant, and honest person, is not righteous. The paradox of the Pharisee’s essential unrighteousness, despite his admirable deeds, is difficult for some to accept, but that is the import of this parable.*

terpretation of the law and the prophets.<sup>14</sup> Other scholars have noted that the reason for the intensity of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees was that they were both speaking to the same audience. "The Pharisees and Jesus were both minor social forces who had similar interests, sought to influence the people in similar ways and so were likely opponents," writes Anthony Saldarini, an important interpreter of Pharisaism.<sup>15</sup> The Pharisees had great influence in Israel. Josephus wrote that they had "the support of the masses";<sup>16</sup> the Sadducees, on the other hand, had the support of the wealthy.

Of the Pharisees' oral tradition, Marcel Simon writes:

The Pharisees' casuistry balanced on the edge of formalism, and sometimes fell over into it. It seems to us to have been overly meticulous and hairsplitting in the extreme . . . [But] this is only . . . the hypertrophy of an approach that was perfectly legitimate in itself. This approach was of vital importance for Pharisaism. In no way did it exclude spontaneous, sincere, and intense piety and the most authentic religious feeling.<sup>17</sup>

There were different currents and emphases within Pharisaism,<sup>18</sup> at least one of which emphasized love and compassion, just as Jesus did. Later Judaic tradition looked back to two important early Pharisaic rabbis, Hillel and Shammai, and delineated a classic conflict between them. Shammai was the strict legalist, who turned away the non-Jew from learning the Law; Hillel used wisdom and kindness to encourage all to learn the Law.<sup>19</sup> It is significant that these Jewish traditions heroize the rabbi who sees love as the central religious value, rather than legalism, separatism, lovelessness; while early rabbinical Judaism was based on Pharisaism,<sup>20</sup> it was based on the more loving, compassionate variety of it.

#### INSIDE AND OUTSIDE:

#### THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

*Sacred space is first found in the heart.*

**B**ECAUSE the portrait of the Pharisees in the Gospels is one-dimensional, we should not forget their "sincere and intense piety," their "authentic religious feeling." Nevertheless, there were factions among them. The extremist Pharisees show how easily an admirable religious ideal can suddenly, unexpectedly turn into its complete opposite.<sup>21</sup>

The Pharisee in the parable in Luke 14 (and we will take him as a typical example of a certain stripe of Pharisaic extremism) goes to the court of the temple, where pious Jews prayed, and, standing alone, first thanks God that he is not like four kinds of sinners: "thieves, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector." In other words, he affirms that he is honest (not a thief or a tax collector), sexually pure, and ritually observant, fasting twice a week, which is more than was required of most Jews. He also pays tithes: "I give a tenth of all my income," he declares, an amount that was supererogatory, more than most Jews tithed.<sup>22</sup> And Jesus portrays him as honest; this Pharisee lives up to his claims.

The tax collector, on the other hand, probably has extorted taxes from fellow Jews on behalf of the hated Gentile conqueror, the Romans. His free association with Gentiles by itself shows that he is a traitor to his religion, nation, and people. That he has become rich by extortion makes him more of a sinner and even more reviled. Tax collectors were outcasts among the Jews.<sup>23</sup> In the parable, the tax collector, standing far off, will not even look up to heaven, but is beating his breast and saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

In the story's spatial arrangement, the tax collector's placement implies that the Pharisee prays in the middle of the temple courts, where all can see him. The tax-collector, however, stands "far off"—perhaps at the outer periphery of the court, or in an outer court—because he does not feel that he is worthy. Rather than recite the list of his own virtues, he openly calls himself a sinner, and his cry for mercy is brief but moving. The Pharisee, of course, does not cry for mercy because, not seeing himself as a sinner in any way, he does not believe that he needs it.

Jesus ends the story with one of his favorite devices—the paradox: "I tell you, this man [the tax collector] went down to his home justified [literally, "made righteous"] rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted." Jesus says explicitly that this tithing payer, this sexually pure, ritually observant, and honest person, is not righteous. The paradox of the Pharisee's essential unrighteousness, despite his admirable deeds, is difficult for some to accept, but that is the import of this parable.<sup>24</sup>

The writings of Mircea Eliade and Hugh Nibley have shown us that sacred space is most sacred at the center.<sup>25</sup> There is a threshold, a boundary enclosing sacred space. But Jesus turns the concept inside out. According to the beautiful paradox of this parable, the unjustified "righteous" person is most central in sacred space while the justified "sinner" is "far off," away from the most central space. This case illustrates that the outcast is sometimes most sacred.

This reading of the parable resonates with and gives meaning to many other passages in the Gospels. Jesus' message is that righteousness done openly is not necessarily righteousness—a central part of his teachings, and one of the major themes of the Sermon on the Mount. Hypocrites—the Greek word for actors on the stage—pay their tithes and offerings publicly, in order to enhance their social status. But Jesus enjoins us: "When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matt. 6:2–4). The wonderful hyperbolic phrase, "let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing," suggests that you yourself should barely know you are paying tithing, let alone other people. The difficult but inspiring truth here is that a righteous act is not righteous simply because it is done. The only thing that makes an act righteous is the motivation of the heart, which cannot be judged by anyone but God. Jesus even commands that righteousness be done "in secret." Obviously, not all good deeds can be done in complete secrecy, but some key acts of righteousness should be.

## THE TEMPLE RECOMMEND

*Problematic policies and implications.*

WITH this background, let's turn to the temple recommend system. The temple recommend measures outward observance. The acts it measures may be righteous acts, but it cannot measure inner motivation.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, in the interview with the bishop and stake president (or their counselors) to receive the temple recommend, we list our righteous deeds to another person. Again, it should be emphasized that Pharisaism was not a monolithic movement, that there were sincere religious varieties of it, and that the Gospels (including this parable) overemphasized its negative aspects. I do not see Mormons in temple recommend interviews as Pharisaical. But the temple recommend system does require a person to assert his or her own righteousness, gauged by outward acts—a method that Jesus taught had spiritual risks.

The temple recommend, once obtained, is a public seal of righteousness. By definition, it is obtained from two Church leaders and then is presented to other Church members at the temple. Many temple activities are done in groups. So to hold a temple recommend is to affirm that you pay tithing, are honest, and attend church regularly. But Jesus said that such things as almsgiving should be completely private, even secret when possible. If not, there is always the risk that your inner motivation is divided.

The closed temple system becomes increasingly problematic when Church university or business policies require every employee to have a recommend, because then the Church holds the member's livelihood and his or her family's livelihood in its hands. This is particularly problematic in the case of tithing. Any employee of the Church—any professor at BYU—is required to be a public, not a secret, tithing payer. If Jesus warned against public righteous deeds and affirmations of one's own righteousness, what might he have thought of "required" righteous deeds and affirmations of one's own right-

eousness?

This is a difficult issue. I thoroughly understand the feelings of those who say, "Tithing money is supporting these Church employees/BYU faculty. Such consecrated money should not be given to those who are not living Church standards." It is understandably distasteful for those who have this point of view to think of consecrated tithes of members being used to pay non-tithe-payers. Yet, if we make tithing and church attendance a requirement for Church employees/BYU faculty, we have compulsory tithing and church attendance, which entirely vitiates the most basic concept of what tithing, church attendance, and any good act should be. It is paradoxical, but if people are forced to pay tithing or attend church, they are not really paying tithing or attending church.

In addition, in the temple recommend/Church employee system, church attendance becomes compulsory. In Steve Epperson's case, attendance even in a specific ward became compulsory. One of the tragic consequences of Epperson's termination is that his tithing history became public. But BYU's policy forces virtually every employee's tithing history to become an open book to the world. Secret tithe-paying is not possible.



THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

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### OPEN AND CLOSED TEMPLES

*Temples could foster community service, education, rejoicing, music—even dancing.*

BUT, some may ask, without temple recommends, how do we ensure that only the righteous enter temples? (In other words, how can we keep non-Mormons and "less-active" Mormons out of temples?) To introduce this issue, I will describe a situation that most Mormons have experienced. Not long ago, one of my favorite nieces (they're all favorites) was scheduled to be married in the Salt Lake Temple. I wanted to be there to witness it, but my recently expired temple recommend needed to be renewed. My oldest sister, this niece's mother, had a recommend, as did my parents and brother. My two younger sisters did not have recommends;

they have been “less active” for years and—like all of us—have interesting religious histories. I thought of them waiting outside the temple walls while the rest of us shared the joy of a marriage within. How are we “active” Mormons supposed to look at “outsider” family members in this situation? Is their outsider status their own fault? Are we to think of it as a good negative experience that will motivate them to eventually become fully active? I wondered if Jesus would leave them outside the temple walls while the rest of the family went inside for the marriage. Or would he stay outside with the “outcasts”?

The Pharisees were often furious with Jesus because he associated freely and frequently with sinners, the ritually impure, the racially impure and unorthodox Samaritans, tax collectors, and even Gentiles on occasion.<sup>27</sup> Yet his righteousness was most fully authenticated by his association with these “outcasts.”

In the Pharisee and tax collector parable, it is the sinner “far off,” not in the accepted sacred center, who is authentically “justified,” holy. If we follow this interpretation of Jesus’ teaching—the sacrality of associating with the “religious outsider”—then inviting non-Mormons and less-active Mormons into our temples would only increase their and our sacred nature. Being inside a temple might do more to inspire non-Mormons and “less-active” members to repent than being outside, with the unspoken implication that they are “less worthy.”

In addition, an open policy might allow temples to become centers for community service and education, or for mutual rejoicing in meetings, music, and even dance.<sup>28</sup> Jorge Luis Borges’s idea of paradise as a library makes me think that temples could also contain excellent libraries and archives. I recommend a visit to the beautiful Reorganized Latter Day Saint temple in Independence, Missouri. RLDS temple use is in accord with many of my views of how an open temple could function—the building includes a school, archives, and library. I am grateful that I, a non-RLDS member, was allowed to visit the inner sanctuary, to look up into the awe-inspiring dome that spirals upward into eternity; being in that building was an authentically spiritual experience for me. In the same way, to have non-Mormons and “less-actives” experience the spirituality of the beautiful interiors of the Salt Lake and Manti Temples might also help the Church.

#### OPEN TEMPLE PRACTICE IN KIRTLAND AND NAUVOO

*A precedent set.*

THE idea of an open temple may seem radical in light of current LDS practice, and many Mormons would vehemently oppose such temple use. But if we look at the earliest LDS temples, in Kirtland and Nauvoo—the temples built while Joseph Smith was alive—we find that they were, to a surprising extent, open temples. Rituals were performed in these buildings, as they are in modern temples. But these edifices were also used for open meetings, for sacrament meetings on Sunday, and even for recreation, like the cultural halls in LDS chapels and stake centers.

After its dedication on 27 March 1836, the Kirtland Temple was used for a multiplicity of functions. On Sunday 3 April, a crowd of a thousand listened to preaching in the morning, then shared the sacrament in an afternoon meeting.<sup>29</sup> The temple, then, was used in the same way as modern ward meetinghouses and stake centers—places we encourage non-members to visit. The High Council held its meetings in the Kirtland Temple,<sup>30</sup> presently, high councils meet in the stake centers. The different quorums of the priesthood held meetings in the temple at night, and “on Thursday evening a prayer meeting [was] held in the lower part of the house, free to all.”<sup>31</sup>

A statement in the *History of the Church* shows that some “non-communicants,” i.e., non-Mormons, attended the popular crowded temple meetings: “During the winter, the House of the Lord at Kirtland was filled to overflowing with attentive hearers, mostly communicants.”<sup>32</sup> So the temple was open to non-members; clearly, the beauty of the temple building and the inspiration of temple meetings could act as powerful missionary tools.

Seen from a broader viewpoint, many activities that took place in the Kirtland Temple might be defined as sacred, a part of the “expanding gospel.” But from a narrower perspective, those same activities might easily be seen as secular. “In the evenings the singers met under the direction of Elders Luman Carter and Jonathan Crosby, Jun., who gave instruction in the principles of vocal music.”<sup>33</sup> This educational aspect of the temple, virtually unknown in Mormon temple practice today, was quite pronounced in Kirtland. The *History of the Church* tells us that “During the week the Kirtland High School is taught in the attic story, by H. M. Hawes, Esq., professor of the Greek and Latin languages.” This school, whose students numbered about 140, was separated into three departments: classical languages; English (the three “r”s); and juvenile. A parent-teacher night was even held in the temple, during which the students exhibited their knowledge.<sup>34</sup>

In fact, Doctrine and Covenants 88:118–141 supports the idea of a multi-purpose temple when it refers to a “house of learning” and a “school of the prophets” in the temple. While this passage limited membership in the “school of the prophets” to those “clean from the blood of this generation” (and apparently to men only, according to verses 127 and 133), women and non-Mormons were not prevented from entering the temple at other times.

In short, the Kirtland Temple, the only temple whose use was overseen by Joseph Smith, was much like a ward meetinghouse or stake center; under its roof, activities took place that parallel those held in modern stake center “cultural halls.” Explicit statements tell us that non-members entered it, and, by implication, were impressed by the spiritual meetings that took place there. Schools and classes were held in the building. Certainly Mormons controlled and dominated the temple, just as Mormons control wards and stake centers today, but none of these secular activities conflicted with the rituals and revelatory experiences that also took place there. The temple was not closed to non-members, nor was it strictly

limited to ritual. Our spiritual history would be much less rich if it had been (think of those pentecostal meetings in the temple described by Zina and Presendia Huntington).<sup>35</sup> As Edward Kimball writes, "The Kirtland Temple during the time of Joseph Smith was . . . open to all."<sup>36</sup>

The Nauvoo Temple, on the other hand, was used, during its short open period, overwhelmingly for rituals the Saints performed before they left Nauvoo for the West. Nevertheless, like the Kirtland Temple, the building had interesting and significant "open" aspects. It was used for meetings, schooling, wedding receptions, and even for rhythmic dancing accompanied by fiddle music. Early in the temple's history, it was used like a stake center or a ward chapel. On Sunday, 19 October 1845, "The congregation met in the Temple. Elder Orson Hyde preached." Again, on Sunday, 28 December, "About two hundred of the brethren and sisters met at ten-thirty A.M. in the attic story of the Temple, some of the side rooms were filled, and the curtains withdrawn." After singing and prayer, Brigham Young preached. Then, "The sacrament was administered."<sup>37</sup>

Rooms for priesthood presidents in the building have modern equivalents in ward chapels and stake centers. Priesthood quorums met in rooms in the temple. Elders met there for prayer.<sup>38</sup> Church leaders had offices there, in which they met with visitors.<sup>39</sup>

The temple was also used for activities that might narrowly be described as secular, such as rhythmic music and dancing. On 30 December 1845, with lively dance music being played, Joseph Young danced a hornpipe, and "The whole floor was covered with dancers." "Secular" songs were then sung.<sup>40</sup> On 1 January 1846, a wedding and a wedding "reception" that included feasting and dancing were held in the temple.<sup>41</sup>

The Nauvoo Temple was not by definition closed to non-members. On 27 December 1845, a non-Mormon U.S. deputy marshal was allowed into the temple, though he was asked to show proper respect for the sacrality of the building:

"On entering the attic hall he was requested to take off his boots and uncover his head." He returned later in the day with another non-Mormon and went through the temple again.<sup>42</sup>

Since early LDS temples were used for a wide variety of ac-

tivities aside from ordinance work and since non-Mormons were allowed to enter early LDS temples, one could easily wonder just how LDS temple tradition evolved into the present "closed" policy. Perhaps the closed system developed during an era of intense Mormon/non-Mormon polarization, the most obvious of which would be during the middle and late nineteenth century. In the Utah of the 1880s, the Peoples' Party membership was essentially the entire Mormon voting bloc, while the Liberal Party was comprised of non- and anti-Mormons. The *Deseret News* and the *Salt Lake Tribune* were vehemently pro-Mormon and anti-Mormon publications, respectively.<sup>43</sup> Helen Mar Whitney, for instance, referred to the latter as "the dirty lying Tribune,"<sup>44</sup> and because the paper specialized in lurid anti-Mormon exposés. Non-Mormons were energetically involved in passing and enforcing anti-polygamy legislation. The first Utah temples were opened in this atmosphere (St. George in 1877; Logan, 1884; Manti, 1888; Salt Lake, 1893), which did not dissipate until after the turn of the century.<sup>45</sup> The closed temple tradi-

tion may be a holdover from this polarized political climate which preceded the era of Mormon assimilation with American culture.

One could argue that the change to closed temples might have resulted when meetinghouses began to be built, thus allowing Sunday and more day-to-day events to be performed there, while special ordinances could be performed in the temple. However, meetinghouses were never built in Kirtland or Nauvoo, though they could have been, and to the best of my knowledge, they were never planned. At the very least, the Kirtland and Nauvoo temples show that Sunday functions, educational and recreational functions, and non-members are not per se antithetical to temples.



KIRTLAND TEMPLE

*Since early LDS temples were used for a wide variety of activities aside from ordinance work and since non-Mormons were allowed to enter early LDS temples, just how did LDS temple tradition evolve into the present "closed" policy?*

NON-MEMBERS AND LESS-ACTIVE FAMILY MEMBERS AT  
TEMPLE MARRIAGES*Our current practice can engender anguish.*

ANOTHER benefit of an open temple would be the greater unity and harmony of “mixed” families at temple marriages. While some may argue that leaving non-Mormon or less-active family members outside the temple during a marriage—a practice most Mormons have encountered—provides motivation for their repentance, other methods of encouraging repentance may be more effective. Though some “excluded” parents, siblings, and relatives have faced their exclusion with understanding, the experience has been traumatic for others.<sup>46</sup>

In one case I learned of via the Internet, the mother of the bride in a temple marriage was non-Mormon. When the groom’s mother arrived to take the couple to the temple, “the bride’s mother (Jewish) broke into sobbing fits, and clung to her daughter, reluctant to let her go. To her, her daughter, on “the most important day of her life,” was being taken from her. In another case, tears were shed by the bride as she thought of family members outside of the temple:

This was a very difficult situation for me. My husband’s parents are not members, and my brother has been ex’d, which meant if I married in the temple my father wouldn’t come either. I wanted very much to have a civil ceremony, and then maybe someday do the temple thing. My husband insisted on a temple wedding. It’s the only thing we have ever really fought about. We held the ceremony early in the morning and only invited a few people. In the witness chairs sat [my husband]’s brother and a friend of mine. Most of our family wasn’t able to come. I cried through the entire ceremony, as I thought of my in[-]laws and my brother and father waiting outside. . . . My sister was away at school and flew home for the wedding. Her friends were shocked to find out that she wouldn’t attend the ceremony, only the luncheon and reception.

Furthermore, as we have seen, Jesus virtually defined sacrality as associating with outcasts<sup>47</sup>—“sinners,” Gentiles, women (who were not seen as proper students or even conversational companions for a rabbi), Hellenizers, tax collectors. Certainly, he did not encourage them in their sin (and he cast out those who were actively sinning inside the temple grounds [Matt. 21:12]); he tried instead to win them to repentance. But he did not convince them by excluding or shunning them; instead, his technique was to compassionately, freely mix with them and, in a move that particularly aroused the wrath of the extremist parties of the Pharisees, take meals with the outcasts. Eating with a non-Jew almost defined what was most unholy to the hyperlegalist.<sup>48</sup> In Luke 15, which includes the parables of the lost coin, lost sheep, and lost (prodigal) son, Jesus represents the “missionary” going “out” to associate with and embrace the sinner, then to bring him or her “in.” While some Mormons might respond to this parable by saying that they are continually trying to bring the “lost sheep” in through mis-

sionary and reactivation efforts, and that non-Mormons can enter the temple through the path of baptism, they may underestimate the powerful message of symbolic exclusion delivered by the barring of non-members or less-actives from marriages.

## CONCLUSION

ENCOURAGING less-active Mormons and non-members to enter our temples as guests in special circumstances (such as marriages) might not only be a method of outreach, of showing them that we value their worth, but a means of bringing them to repentance, as well. This practice would also allow us to modify a system in which we are required, in applying for a recommend, to assert our own righteousness, a system that does not allow us to pay our alms “not letting our right hand know what our left hand is doing.” This would also prevent the temple recommend system from being used as a method of ideological control in a Church university or employee system. Furthermore, Kirtland and Nauvoo temple practices give us plentiful justification for “open” temples, temples used for sacrament meetings and stake conferences, for music and dance, for schools and learning, with non-members invited inside on occasion.<sup>49</sup> ☐

## NOTES

1. This article is not meant to be authoritative, final, or certain; it is merely my musings and remusings on a particular subject, an attempt at re-evaluation and re-thinking.

2. For the case, see Scott Abbott, “On Ecclesiastical Endorsement at Brigham Young University,” *SUNSTONE* 20:1 (April 1997), 9–14. For a broader perspective on termination of feminists, historians, and intellectuals at BYU, see Linda Ray Pratt and C. William Haywood, “Academic Freedom and Tenure: Brigham Young University,” *Academe* (Sept./Oct. 1997), which discusses the Epperson case briefly. Gail Houston, the main subject of the *Academe* report, did hold a temple recommend.

3. Certainly, the Old and New Testament temple was thoroughly “closed,” but it was far more exclusionary than modern Mormon temples, so it cannot be used as a strict pattern for Mormon temples. Specifically, many righteous Israelite men and all women were excluded from entering the temple building itself in ancient Israel. Only priests were allowed to enter. In the hierarchy of increasingly sacred temple spaces were: Court of the Gentiles (non-Israelites allowed); Court of Women (Gentiles excluded, Israelite men and women allowed); Court of Israel (Israelite men allowed, all women excluded); Priests’ Court (all but priests excluded); temple building, including the main hall (only priests allowed); the holy of holies (only the high priest allowed in, once a year). Josephus, *Antiquities* 15:11, and *The Jewish War*, 5:5; W. F. Stinespring, “Temple, Jerusalem,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 534–60.

4. I use the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). See *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

5. I have supplied “evildoers” instead of NRSV’s “rogues” here; “rogues” seems entirely too weak. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke XXIV* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985), 1187.

6. This point is made by E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 275. Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1991), 141.

7. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 550.

8. See Marcus J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness, and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), 59, who argues that the Pharisees, in par-

ticular, sought purity by separation. In other words, they "intended to insulate and isolate Israel from the practices of the heathen, to protect her against assimilation and corruption," from "Roman political control and Gentile influence."

9. Josephus tells us that the Pharisees "have the reputation of being unrivaled experts in their country's laws," *Life* 191, John Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 98.

10. See Borg, *Conflict, Holiness, and Politics*, 127. Cf. the "holiness code" of Lev. 19, also 17–26. A recurrent theme is man's being made holy by God: "I am the Lord; I sanctify you," (22:32.); Lev. 11:45.

11. Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees*, 3 vol. (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 3:288. The Pharisees were a purity sect, and the centrality of the temple explained their beliefs and behavior, for to desire a life of purity was to wish to live as a priest. See also Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees*, 29.

12. Lev. 21:1–22; 4:3–12.

13. However, the Pharisees went beyond merely doing exactly as the Law prescribed; situations in their contemporary culture demanded new laws of application. An oral tradition of laws arose, a multiplication of laws, especially in ritual purity. This kept the law alive, reinterpreting the law for the "modern" generation. See Marcel Simon, *Jewish Sects at the Time of Jesus*, trans. James H. Farley (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967, orig. 1960), 36. These "new" laws often arose from hair-splitting interpretations of the Torah.

14. There is a possibility "that Jesus himself was raised in the Pharisaic tradition and so was a natural object of concern for his fellow sectarians." R. A. Wild, cited in Günter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes*, trans. Allan W. Mahnke (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 38.

15. Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1988), 293.

16. *Antiquities* 13:402; Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees*, 80.

17. Simon, *Jewish Sects*, 2.

18. Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees*, 32–40. Some Pharisees argued among themselves about the ritual details of handwashing, 39–40.

19. Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees*, 32–35.

20. Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus*, 140. "According to the commonly held view of all of the branches of Judaism, only the Pharisees survived the catastrophe of the year 70 C.E., passing seamlessly into the rabbinate."

21. Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees*, 37.

22. Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, trans. S. H. Hooke, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972, orig. 1954), 140. For the Pharisees' stress on tithing, see Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, 296.

23. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According To Luke*, 1075, 1186; Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 141. Tax collectors were "shunned by all respectable persons." Scholars disagree over whether association with Gentiles or dishonesty was hated most by fellow Jews, but both would have been factors.

24. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 142, writes that this parable, to Jesus' audience, "must have seemed shocking and inconceivable." It can still be unsettling to our religious attitudes today, especially if we believe that God works on a strictly just, *quid pro quo* basis. This parable has even been interpreted as expressing a proto-Pauline theology of grace. See F. E. Bruce, "'Justification by Faith' in the Non-Pauline Writings of the New Testament," *EvQ* 24 (1952), 66–67, as cited in Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 1185. Fitzmyer warns against reading the parable as a fully developed Pauline justification by faith, but it is, nevertheless, far beyond strict justice based on works. See also Jeremias, *Parables*, 141.

25. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1958), 374–79; *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), 36–47; Hugh Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1987), 359.

26. See Edward L. Kimball's excellent "The History of LDS Temple Admission Standards," *Journal of Mormon History* 24 (spring 1998), 135–76, for an overview of the development and variations in temple recommend practice. See also Robert A. Tucker, "Temple Recommend," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1992), 4:1446.

27. See, e.g., Luke 5:27–32; 15:2. The Pharisees had a concept of "salvation by segregation," while Jesus set up a principle of "salvation by association." W. Manson, quoted in Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 589.

28. For dance, see below on the Nauvoo Temple. When I presented this paper at a Sunstone symposium, I suggested at this point that a room for the local chapter of Amnesty International would be appropriate for a temple, because it works to free those imprisoned unjustly. One person in the audience objected strongly to this idea. But Jesus defined sacrality as concern for social justice and

equality, compassion for the afflicted, despised, and imprisoned (Matt. 25:36).

29. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Period I: History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet and . . . Period II: From the Manuscript History of Brigham Young and Other Original Documents*, ed. Brigham H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Deseret Book, 1902–1932), 2:434.

30. 16 May 1836, *History of the Church* 2:442; June 16, 2:445.

31. *History of the Church* 2:474.

32. *History of the Church* 2:474.

33. *History of the Church* 2:474.

34. *History of the Church* 2:475. For the importance of education in the Kirtland temple experience, see Roger D. Launius, *The Kirtland Temple: A Historical Narrative* (Independence, [Mo.]: Herald Publishing House, 1986), 58–61. Cf. William Burgess Jr., *Autobiography*, 1, LDS Church Archives, as cited in Launius, 157, n. 37.

35. Edward Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge & Crandall, 1877), 207–8.

36. Kimball, "The History of LDS Temple Admission Standards," 136n.

37. *History of the Church* 7:555–56.

38. *History of the Church* 7:535, 542; *History of the Church* 7:555; cf. 593–94, etc.

39. See the Journal of Hosea Stout, Dec. 30, 1845, in Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:100. Stout, the Nauvoo police chief, evidently held meetings with the police force in the temple. See 19 Dec. 1845 (1:98), and 1 Jan. 1846 (1:101).

40. *History of the Church* 7:557.

41. William Clayton/H. C. Kimball journal, LDS Church Archives, 1 Jan. 1846.

42. *History of the Church* 7:554.

43. See Richard Poll et al., *Utah's History* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1989), 248–49 (1870); 270–71 (1890).

44. Journal, LDS Church Archives, 25 Dec. 1884.

45. The 1890 Manifesto was the beginning of the end of radical polarization, but it was far from being the end itself. See Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); E. Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

46. I should emphasize that I feel positively about the validity of temple marriage and temple ordinances. I am only examining the policy of excluding non-LDS and less-active LDS family members and close friends from the experience of witnessing a temple marriage.

47. See T. W. Manson, quoted in Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 1072. See n. 23 above.

48. Klaus Berger, "Jesus als Pharisäer und frühe Christen als Pharisäer," *Novum Testamentum* 30 (1988), 231–62. Berger asserts that the Pharisees' objections to Jesus were based largely on his contact with such unclean people as tax collectors, lepers, and prostitutes rather than on his preaching. It was this contact with such outcasts that infuriated the Pharisees, "for it undermined their understanding of holiness and purity."

49. Making temples that can be used as stake centers (as were the Kirtland and Nauvoo Temples), or dedicating stake centers so that they could be used as temples, would also be financially advantageous in non-affluent, third-world countries.



In my study of Mosaic Law,  
I was struck with its serious flaw:  
A tooth for a tooth  
is completely uncouth,  
and it lacks any *je ne sais quoi*.

—DOUGLAS DICKSON