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## **Deliverer or Oppressor: Missionaries’ Views of Hitler during the 1930s**

Jessie L. Embry

North Ogden native Bertis L. Embry, my father, served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany from 1935 to 1938. As a historian I have often wondered what it was like for him to be in Germany when Adolf Hitler rose to power just before the outbreak of World War II. When I asked him that question in an oral history interview in 1981, my father recalled that while his mother was “actually very scared,” he was not really concerned when he received his call. “I thought it would be an interesting thing to do. I didn’t have misgivings. I didn’t know anything about Germany. I had heard of Hitler but why and how and where [I was called to serve a mission] didn’t make any difference.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Even after he had been in Germany for a year, he was not especially concerned. He wrote to his parents: “You wrote that Brother Card was so worried about his son coming over here. You don’t have to worry. If there was any danger the missionaries would not be sent here. . . . We are trying to do the work of the Lord, and so long as we do our duty we haven’t anything to worry about.”<sup>[2]</sup> But he also recalled in the oral history that missionary work was “difficult because Hitler was against all the churches.” He even called that time in Germany “a day of the anti-Christ.”<sup>[3]</sup> His comments reconfirmed my negative views of Hitler.

Later I found out that not all missionaries who served in Germany during the 1930s shared my father’s views of the Nazi regime. I was shocked when I interviewed other missionaries who compared some of Hitler’s views with Mormon programs and claimed that Hitler had declared the Mormon Church and the National Socialist party the two most perfect organizations on the earth.<sup>[4]</sup>

These comments piqued my interest, and I decided to examine the views of Latter-day Saint missionaries of Hitler during the 1930s. Recognizing that this would be a limited research project, I focused on American missionaries’ opinions of Hitler. Other very interesting papers could be done on the LDS German missionaries and members during the same time period.

What I found after examining a number of sources was that the American missionaries had mixed feelings about Hitler. They received certain favors, but they also were limited in their work. They saw virtues in some of Hitler’s arguments, but they also recognized weaknesses. But I also found that these responses were not limited to Latter-day Saints; most churches had mixed feelings about Hitler, and Hitler gave confused messages to religious organizations. This paper will explore Hitler’s relationships with churches and then focus on the missionaries’ views of the relationship between the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Nazi government.

## **Hitler and Religions**

When Hitler first came to power, he spoke positively about churches in general. In 1933 he declared, “The new state wants the church. Not to make a pliable tool of her, but because it knows where the foundations of a people are

laid.”<sup>[5]</sup> However, he supported a German church for Germans rather than any of the number of religions that could be found in the country at the time, explaining that Germany needed “a Christian church in the midst of the German people when it is a Church acting on behalf of the German people, helping the German people in selfless service to recognize and carry out its God-given calling.”<sup>[6]</sup> Hitler attempted to encourage such a national church when he spoke in favor of a church election in July 1933. His comments, however, prompted a negative response from German church leaders, who called for a unified and centralized church but defined the new church in very traditional terms. That was his only attempt to align himself with a German church.<sup>[7]</sup>

Although Hitler did not speak in support of a German church again, he continued to comment about religion. His statements sometimes seemed to contradict each other. Some seemed to be very negative about churches in general; others seemed to hold out a carrot of support to religions. A couple of statements regarding youth organizations dramatize his comments. In 1936 Roy Welker, president of the German-Austrian Mission, went with Elmer Peterson, an agricultural specialist visiting from Utah, to talk with the German officials. They were told “that as soon as the Churches were able to take care of the youth of Germany as [they] should, which up to now it had failed to do, the government would be willing to turn the care of [them] to the Churches.” After making this comment, the mission manuscript history continued, “These are very significant statements from the officials of the Government since the present trend of the German government is to keep a rigid control of its youth.”<sup>[8]</sup> A year later though Hitler explained in a speech: “There is only one German people, and therefore there can be only one German youth. . . . This Reich stands and it will build itself up in the future upon its Youth. And this new Reich will give its Youth to no one, but will itself take the Youth and will give [them] its own education and training.”<sup>[9]</sup>

## Hitler and Catholics

One of the classic examples of Hitler’s relationships with other churches was with the Catholic Church. Hitler had been baptized Catholic and denied rumors that he was leaving the Catholic Church to become a Protestant.<sup>[10]</sup> In 1933 he signed a concordat with the Catholic Church allowing it to continue and maintain its properties and activities as long as they were “religious, cultural, or charitable.” The agreement included provisions that the German youth programs would not prevent Catholic youth from attending church and “that nothing incompatible with their religious and moral convictions and duties will be urged upon them.”<sup>[11]</sup> Some of the Catholic students supported Hitler in the early 1930s. In 1933 the Catholic Student Union argued: “It is the destiny and the will of the Catholic Students Union to embody and disseminate the idea of the Third Reich. . . . Only the powerful National Socialist State, rising out of the Revolution, can bring about for us the re-Christianization of our culture.”<sup>[12]</sup>

The Catholic Church leaders were not as convinced though. There was some concern with the first concordat that the Catholics would lose their youth organizations;<sup>[13]</sup> and those fears were confirmed. As the pope argued in 1937: “No one has the slightest intention of putting any obstacles in the way of the pursuit by the youth of Germany . . . of inviolable loyalty to the fatherland. What we do oppose and what we must oppose is the deliberate and carefully fostered contradiction which is being opened up between these educational objectives and religious ones. . . . He who sings the song of allegiance to his earthly fatherland, must not become a deserter and traitor by disloyalty to his God, his church, and his eternal fatherland.”<sup>[14]</sup> As a result, some Catholic priests were arrested for “moral indecencies.” As my father recalled in 1937 the Catholics “were warned not to go making any more statements about the German courts or

<sup>[15]</sup>

that all the high officials would be made to answer a lot of questions that might prove embarrassing.”

## Hitler and “Sects”

If Nazi Germany was a difficult time for Lutherans and Catholics, the two prominent churches in the country at the time, the government was even more demanding for smaller religious organizations. The National Socialist government closely investigated what were referred to as sects, complaining that members had contact with Communists, Free Masons, Jews, and international groups and refused to give the German greeting.<sup>[16]</sup> According to historian Christine Elizabeth King, who studied five smaller religions in Germany during the 1930s, including the Mormons, “By 1933 each sect found itself forced to clarify what survival meant for its members and what it, as a group, held dear and what it was prepared to sacrifice.”<sup>[17]</sup> As my father recalled: “People called us a sect as they do now. Most people in Germany were either Lutheran or Catholic. There was not much in between, and none of the churches were very strong because Hitler was against all the churches. The Jehovah Witnesses had been completely forbidden to hold meetings or do anything. The Seventh Day Adventists were having a struggle.

[Hitler] kicked the Free Masons out.”<sup>[18]</sup>

## Hitler and the Saints

For Latter-day Saints, survival in Nazi Germany took a variety of twists and turns. The missionaries were allowed to teach the gospel up until they were withdrawn in 1939 at the beginning of the war in Europe. In fact, during the Hitler regime the Church received some favorable press. After some discussion with American governmental leaders, missionaries were allowed to purchase registered deutsche marks, which they received at a better exchange rate. At the same time, though, missionary work was limited, some tracts could not be distributed because of their comments about Zion and Jews, some songs about Zion could not be sung in meetings, and the Church youth program was essentially eliminated since all young Germans were required to be part of Hitler Youth. Because they had both successes and failures with Nazis, the missionaries’ views of Hitler and the National Socialist party were both positive and negative.

## Missionaries’ Positive Views of Hitler

Elmer Stettler, the son of Swiss immigrants to Logan, Utah, who served a mission in Germany during the 1930s, summarized some of the positive views that missionaries had of Hitler. He recalled: “When we came home [from our missions], we loved the German people. We didn’t see anything wrong with what they were doing. We liked Hitler. We would just eat up articles where some of his news people were showing how the pioneers were organized into groups. They were tying our LDS history into kicking the Germans out of their colonies in Africa. We used it for material to disseminate the gospel.”<sup>[19]</sup> Other LDS Americans were impressed by Hitler and his ability to speak and motivate people. Wendell C. Irvine wrote in an article in the *Improvement Era* that despite all of Hitler’s weaknesses, “the greatest thing that could be said of him, however, might well be inscribed on his tombstone, ‘Adolf Hitler Orator.’”<sup>[20]</sup> Sanford Bingham, a missionary at the same time as my father, felt the same way. After listening to one of Hitler’s speeches after Germany took over Austria, Bingham concluded, “I’m afraid if I stayed here a few more years I would become completely Nazified myself.”<sup>[21]</sup> John M. Russon, who was also on a mission in Germany, recalled the positive

press that the Church received during the Hitler regime. He explained, “So we missionaries didn’t have all that harsh a feeling toward Hitler except, of course, for the dictatorship, which was opposed to our basic principle of free agency.”<sup>[22]</sup>

Roy Welker and his wife, Elizabeth, were especially persuaded by Hitler because he seemed to like the Church. Roy Welker recalled in an oral history interview, “My personal opinion was that Hitler was very much impressed with the LDS faith and Church and its practices.”<sup>[23]</sup> He recalled that when he went to Germany in 1934 Hitler was just coming to power and that he and his wife didn’t know what would happen. He added: “As things unfolded, we saw ourselves more favorably situated than we had anticipated and we were happily surprised. Then when Mother [Roy’s wife, Elizabeth] got in with this national women’s organization and was indirectly associated with Hitler, it was a great relief to us. . . . Things went along well; we didn’t have any trouble to speak of.”<sup>[24]</sup>

In an article published in the *Improvement Era* in 1936, Welker answered the question, “How fares the Church in Germany?” He explained that the missionaries were “disinterested in politics, but tremendously interested in life and life’s happiness” and were “ceaselessly carry[ing] the message of cheer and hope to everyone who is willing in the least measure to listen.”<sup>[25]</sup> When the Welkers returned from their mission, Elizabeth Welker spoke occasionally about her experiences. Her comment was, “You may hate Hitler, but you have to acknowledge he is doing things.” She praised his work with the youth and his attempts to make them a “superior race.” She explained that the only problem he had with Jews was that they seemed to hold so much of the world’s wealth. She concluded that the Nazis’ views of Jews “may be wrong, but they are certainly sincere,” adding that whatever the Germans did to the Jews, they did not lynch them as “America does the Negro.”<sup>[26]</sup>

P. M. Kelly, the mission president in the Swiss-German Mission, also reported about the Jewish situation in Germany when he returned from his mission. After pointing out racial problems in the United States and the extreme poverty amidst great wealth, Kelly said that the Americans should not be too hard on the Germans. He was not saying that the Germans were “free from guilt. What he did was to try to see Germany from the Germans’ point view.”<sup>[27]</sup>

Some missionaries talked about the positive things that Hitler had done for Germany. Kelly explained that Hitler united a splintered country with 32 political parties after World War I with the slogan “one government, one people, one leader.”<sup>[28]</sup> Two missionaries from Provo wrote to their hometown paper appealing for “a more tolerant view” of Germany and praising the German people: “They are doing a masterful piece of impregnable building, due to the unity of purpose.”<sup>[29]</sup>

Sanford Bingham elaborated on the same point. He wrote in his journal on 30 March 1936, “[Hitler] has really done a lot for this country. He added in his oral history: “That was the attitude that most of the missionaries, I think, had after they’d been there a while and got used to the restrictions. [They] thought, ‘My everything is cleaned up. The streets are clean. There are no streetwomen walking the streets. Everyone is busy.’” It seemed that everyone was employed, but he did not notice that “most people were working, of course, to build up, to rearm Germany.” There seemed to be a lot of enthusiasm among the people, although it was sometimes “artificial.”<sup>[30]</sup>

Usually the positive comments about Hitler involved what many missionaries saw as similarities between Hitler’s plans and Church programs. Missionaries reasoned about why the Church was allowed to continue in Germany and came up with a variety of responses. According to Sanford Bingham, “The missionaries had the impression that we were a favored church in Germany . . . because . . . the missionaries had conversed with Hitler and . . . that his buddy in

the First World War was LDS. Those stories were being told all over the mission.”<sup>[31]</sup> Bingham recalled having to tract by himself shortly after arriving on his mission. He recorded in his journal on 9 January 1936 that he met a lady who seemed to be able to understand his German. “I told her of Joseph Smith, about the Word of Wisdom, and that missionaries had visited Hitler.” Bingham added, “This was all supposition on my part. I had no proof.”<sup>[32]</sup>

The missionaries believed that elements of Church practices started appearing in the Nazi government shortly after Church tracts were confiscated.<sup>[33]</sup> Others said that the top German officials had received copies of the Book of Mormon and other Church documents. Missionaries believed that Hitler had read the Book of Mormon.<sup>[34]</sup> Articles in Church magazines and newspapers noted, “A number of interesting parallels can be seen between the church and some of the ideas and policies of the National Socialists.”<sup>[35]</sup>

The similarities between Mormons and Hitler ranged from views of the family, the importance of marriage, the strength of the educational system, the courage of the Mormon pioneers, the sense of the Word of Wisdom, the wisdom of a fast day to help the poor, the value of youth programs, and the need to do genealogy.<sup>[36]</sup> A summary of the arguments for a fast day and genealogy show the pattern.

Roy Welker recalled in an oral history interview: “I’ve felt that this fast day that he established—that’s what it amounted to in the contributions for aiding the poor and so forth—he borrowed from the Church. Mrs. Welker felt that way too as she traveled with his ladies.”<sup>[37]</sup> Dale Clark published an article in the *Deseret News* that referred to the fast day as “a well organized campaign . . . designed not only to alleviate the acute poverty, but [to] develop that spirit of sacrifice that is so being stressed in the new Germany and also of creating more of a feeling of unity and brotherhood through voluntary mutual help.”<sup>[38]</sup>

An article in the *Millennial Star* also compared the Church’s fast day to the German plan. The article concluded: “It is indeed singular that a comparison of the details of the two systems of organized fasting shows them to be so nearly identical. Perhaps that part of the message of the Restored Gospel may have been directly or indirectly the inspiration and the model for the new scheme adopted by the German Government—perhaps not. But evident, at least, is the fact that consciously or unconsciously, the people of the world are discovering that the Lord’s way is best. The leaven of the Gospel is spreading.”<sup>[39]</sup>

Missionaries described the fast day. Fred Duersch Sr. recalled, “The first of every month [Hitler] instigated the one-pot meal, that is one pot with everything cooked together. Everybody got the same thing. The Hitler Youth would go around with their cans and people would donate ten Pfenning in those cans.”<sup>[40]</sup> Duersch and another missionary Walter Jaggi were not sure that the money actually went to help the poor, though. According to Duersch, “It was reported that every month they collected enough to build another warship.”<sup>[41]</sup> Jaggi added that the differences between the cost of the one-pot meal and a regular meal “went to support the poor supposedly, but again a lot of it went to support the build up of the army.”<sup>[42]</sup>

With Hitler’s attempts to create a superior race, Church members for the first time were encouraged in their genealogy work in Germany. Roy Welker recalled in October 1934 that he went to the University of Berlin to discuss genealogy work. The professor invited the mission president along with other Church leaders to join a genealogical society and then “paid high tribute to the Mormons, stating that they understood the work of genealogy better than any

people they knew and that their purpose for seeking it is high and worthy.”<sup>[43]</sup> According to an article by James M. Kirkham in the *Church News*, “Mr. Hitler, through government agencies, is helping the Germans find their ancestors.” Kirkham pointed out that “to prove that he is a pure blood German for at least four generations or back until 1800 is the desire of each resident.” As a result, more resources were available to do genealogy.<sup>[44]</sup>

With this new emphasis, records were opened up for the first time and members were encouraged rather than discouraged to use them. Some even received letters from pastors complimenting the Saints for their patriotism.<sup>[45]</sup> Roy Welker recalled his pleasant surprise when Church members were asked to do a radio broadcast on genealogy in 1935. “We were shocked with the announcement of such an opportunity having taken it for granted that since the government regulates the radio any opportunity for us of its use was out of the question. We are in happy anticipation of an opportunity.”<sup>[46]</sup>

### **Missionaries’ Negative Views of Hitler**

Not all of the missionaries’ comments about Hitler were positive. Fred Duersch Sr. recalled watching the Nazis take a family away: “We still don’t know why. Apparently from the reports we got, they were doing something against Hitler. That was one of the first bad experiences that I had. It sort of turned me against Hitler.”<sup>[47]</sup> Ralph Sanford Kelly, who was on a mission in the early 1930s, also recalled watching German citizens being taken away. On 16 January 1934 he wrote: “While tracting this morning, we saw storm troopers taking a woman down to be sterilized. She was sitting on a stretcher and yelling at the top of her voice. Frau Fraude informed me this afternoon that two pastors had been sent to the concentration camp because they had said something against the government. This is not uncommon—in fact, it happens frequently.”<sup>[48]</sup>

My father especially disliked the ways that the government seemed to affect the people. On 30 January 1937 he wrote in his journal: “Today starts the 5th year that Hitler has been the leader of Germany. He has made order and perhaps done a lot of good but you sure can tell the difference in the actions of these people as compared with those at home. They are held down with an iron hand.”<sup>[49]</sup> My father made several comments about how he felt that the German people were not free to talk to the missionaries. Once he wrote while he was tracting, “We sure got the cold shoulder all over. The people are getting scared to take the tracts even if they wanted to read them. . . . I’m sure glad I live in a country where the people aren’t and don’t have to be scared to death all the time.”<sup>[50]</sup>

Occasionally my father met someone who was willing to express a different view of the government. On 27 February 1937 he wrote: “While tracting ran on to a [Russian] Communist. He sure doesn’t think much of the German government. It seems good to find someone once in a while who is not so bulldozed.”<sup>[51]</sup> But he recalled in his oral history that they had to be careful about speaking to those who opposed Hitler. My father and his companion met an elevator operator who “was an anti-Hitler.” The missionaries would ride up and down the elevator with the man. “He wouldn’t stop to pick people up.” Once he invited the missionaries to his

home. “We sure heard the other side of Hitler’s Germany from this guy because he was definitely anti-Hitler.”<sup>[52]</sup> Ralph Sanford Kelly, who was on a mission before my father, found that there were a number of people who were opposed to Hitler, but they were afraid to say anything against the government.<sup>[53]</sup>

The missionaries’ problems with the German government came in a variety of forms, usually small encounters

with the police. As my father explained in his oral history interview: “We didn’t ever have any trouble with big Hitler, but we had a lot of little Hitlers. They were always wanting LIS to come into the police station. We would get called in and they would want to know why we were passing out these tracts. They would start checking it out and would find out that we had permission to pass out tracts.”<sup>[54]</sup>

In his journal my father described an experience which closely matched the description in the oral history. On 28 October 1937 he wrote: “Had to go with the police. They sent a summons address to ‘the leader of the Church of Jesus of the Saints of the last three days.’ The guy sure excused himself for writing that and blamed it on someone else. He wouldn’t let me keep the letter because he didn’t want to have us laughing at them. He just wanted to see about the tracts that had been passed out. He claimed that it wasn’t allowed. We told him that it had been allowed when a Herr Daniels was there, so he called Dortmund to get ahold of Herr Daniels. He told us to come back Saturday. He was quite nice, so I think we will come out okay.”<sup>[55]</sup>

The manuscript histories for the Swiss-German and the German—Austrian Missions had examples throughout the 1930s where missionaries were not allowed to tract in certain cities for a short period of time.<sup>[56]</sup> President Heber J. Grant commented after he returned from a trip to Europe in 1937, “One thing that was very pleasing was that we had perfect liberty in the holding of our meetings in Germany.” He gave an example of some elders who were questioned if they had the right to preach, and the officers could find no evidence that the law would stop their work.<sup>[57]</sup>

While getting permission to tract again sometimes only required the missionaries to go to the police station, in other ways the German government limited their work. The government refused to let the missionaries pass out the tracts titled *Signs of the Great Apostasy*, *Divine Authority*, and *Rays of Living Light*.<sup>[58]</sup> On 8 January 1938 my father wrote to his parents, “Monday morning we went to see the police to see how much we were allowed to do. We have our freedom, only that we aren’t allowed to pass out any tracts from door to door.”<sup>[59]</sup> As district leader for the missionaries, he received information that the branch in Essen wanted to hold a program for branch members who were being called into the army, but the meeting was not allowed.<sup>[60]</sup>

My father also recalled going to the railroad station and seeing an “Elder Gardner.” “He hadn’t had a shave for a couple of weeks and had on an old suit. He sure looked like a tramp. He told me he had been arrested and had just spent the night in jail. They had found a priesthood book on him and were making a big stink about the Church being *Staatsfeindlich*” [an enemy of the state]. My father then added his personal feelings: “These dumb Heines and their cops. They are absolutely too dumb to listen to any reason. One hasn’t a bit of personal right unless they want to give it to you.”<sup>[61]</sup>

My father also recalled another experience when he was transferred to Erfurt. A member of the Church came and told the missionaries they would probably not be given a visa to remain in the town and they might be forced to leave. When they went to the police station, they were told that they could not stay. However, when they returned to their apartment they found that they both had transfers. For my father this was a spiritual experience: “The Lord knew what was going on. He had the mission president get us out before we got kicked out really.”<sup>[62]</sup>

While most problems were minor, there were other examples where missionaries were imprisoned or sent to another country. Once American government officials tried to help straighten out problems between the missionaries and the government. Alvin Schoehals, the mission secretary in the Swiss-German Mission was arrested and put into prison because of his comments about the German government and its views of religion in a letter to his parents. While the letter was accurate in its views of Hitler, especially his views on the Catholic Church in 1937, the decision was made

to regard the incident as “youthful indiscretion.”<sup>[63]</sup>

Missionaries also had a negative view of the Germans in their youth programs. In 1934 after a meeting with the missionaries where they expressed problems trying to reach the young people, Welker wrote, “We are recognizing our increased difficulties and straining our imaginations to find new means of reaching the people.”<sup>[64]</sup> A year later he wrote, “We also decided to make a careful study of the Hitler Jugend movement and see if we could not make our program fit into it in some way to help the young people and also to gain the support and help of the government.”<sup>[65]</sup>

Eventually Latter-day Saints had to eliminate Boy Scouts in Germany.<sup>[66]</sup> One German youth recalled that he wanted to be a Boy Scout during this time period but could not because he had to join the Hitler Youth.<sup>[67]</sup> In 1937 the Plauen Police questioned some activities planned by the missionaries for the youth and the missionaries were fined. Although the matter was taken to court, the Church eliminated the activities from the Church’s outline.<sup>[68]</sup> Later the Zwickau Branch Mutual Improvement Association was not allowed to have an Easter celebradon.<sup>[69]</sup>

German Justus Ernst recalled that when the Hitler Youth started meeting on Sunday in 1938 he was not very active in the Church.<sup>[70]</sup> My father recalled that most of “the kids belonged. . . . They marched and sang. Sundays were taken up in this kind of nuisance for the small kids.”<sup>[71]</sup> One of the branch presidents had a twelve-year-old son who was in the Hitler Youth. According to my father, “These kids were trained to squeal on their folks if they said anything or did anything out of line with what Hitler wanted. It was kind of touch and go many times to know what we could do and what we could say.”<sup>[72]</sup>

## Missionaries and Germany Overall

For the most part the missionaries had very little contact with the German government. As early as 1933 missionaries were cautioned not to speak or write of politics.<sup>[73]</sup> Elder John A. Widtsoe asked the missionaries not to be discouraged about missionary work, saying, “This troubled time is a time to share the gospel.”<sup>[74]</sup> This policy continued according to President Welker.<sup>[75]</sup> A letter circulated to the presidents of the East and West German and Swiss—Austrian Missions explained that the German-speaking paper *Der Stern* “should be confined to discussions and explanations of a purely religious character.”<sup>[76]</sup> In 1938 Richard R. Lyman, then president of the European missions, reported in general conference that the missionaries lived by the twelfth article of faith, adding: “They refrain from discussing government or governmental policies and they are all instructed positively not to participate in the politics of the countries where they labor. They are sent forth to give purpose to living, to improve the condition of the present and to inspire in the hearts of the people hope for the future.”<sup>[77]</sup> My father tried to

follow that advice. After giving a brief account of one of Hitler’s speeches in a letter to his parents, my father added, “But enough of politics as I imagine that you now know more about it than I do. I don’t have much time to worry about



the whole affair.”<sup>[78]</sup>

## Conclusion

The American missionaries’ views of Hitler varied during the 1930s. Ralph Sanford Kelly wrote in his journal in 1933 that he saw Hitler drive by and then commented, “I had seen Germany’s god.”<sup>[79]</sup> But Sanford Bingham wrote in his journal after attending a lecture in Basel, Switzerland, that “the speaker’s main point was probably the fact that National Socialism is forcing the people to worship Hitler instead of God.” Bingham recorded, “It was just a lot of bunk to me.” He added in the oral history interview, “You see, at that time I thought that s really an exaggeration that Hitler was forcing the people to believe that he’s a god.”<sup>[80]</sup> With a more complete picture of history, we can see that those who thought negatively of Hitler were probably right. Yet for those missionaries who grew to love the German people and wanted to share the gospel with them, tolerating Hitler seemed the best course of action at that time.

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<sup>[1]</sup> ‘Bertis L. Embry Oral History, interview by Jessie L. Embry, 1981–1983, 44, copy in author’s possession. A copy of the Bertis L. Embry Oral History is also in Special Collections at Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

<sup>[2]</sup> Bertis L. Embry to folks, 8 November 1936, Wuppertal-Barmen, 1; copies of all letters are in author’s possession.

<sup>[3]</sup> Embry Oral History, 57–58.

<sup>[4]</sup> Walter Jaggi Oral History, interview by Jessie Embry, 1987, LDS Germanspeaking Immigrants Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Manuscript Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 13–15; hereafter referred to as LDS German.

<sup>[5]</sup> Peter Matheson, ed., *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1981), 21–22.

<sup>[6]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[7]</sup> Ibid., 27–29, 24.

<sup>[8]</sup> German-Austrian Mission Manuscript History, Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, quarter ending 30 September 1936, 422; hereafter cited as Church Archives.

<sup>[9]</sup> Norman H. Baynes, *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, April 1922–1939: An English Translation of Representative Passages Arranged under Subjects and Edited by Norman H. Baynes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 390–91.

<sup>[10]</sup> Journal History, 1 July 1933, 13–14, Church Archives.

<sup>[11]</sup> Matheson, *Third Reich*, 29–33.

<sup>[12]</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>[13]</sup> Ibid., 34–35.

<sup>[14]</sup> Ibid., 70–71.

- [15] Bertis L. Embry Journal, May 28, 1937, 181, original in author's possession. A microfilm copy has been donated to the Church Archives.
- [16] Christine Elizabeth King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions: Five Case Studies in Non-Conformity* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), 227.
- [17] *Ibid.*, xi—xii.
- [18] Embry Oral History, 57.
- [19] Elmer Stettler Oral History, interview by Jessie L. Embry, 1987, 5, LDS German.
- [20] Wendell C. Irvine, "Adolf Hitler: The Man and his Ideas," *Improvement Era* 35 (November 1931): 55.
- [21] Sanford Bingham Oral History, interview by Douglas F. Tobler and Alan F. Keele, 1974, 25, James Moyle Oral History Program, Church Archives.
- [22] John M. Russon Oral History, interview by Richard Jensen, 1975, 6, James Moyle Oral History Program, Church Archives.
- [23] Roy Welker Oral History, interview by Richard Jensen, 1973, 58, James Moyle Oral History Program, Church Archives.
- [24] *Ibid.*, 29.
- [25] Roy A. Welker, "How Fares the Church in Germany," *Improvement Era* 39 (October 1936): 608.
- [26] Newspaper article from Paris, Idaho, *Post*, Roy and Elizabeth Welker Scrapbook, Church Archives.
- [27] "Seeing Germany Thru German Eyes," newspaper clipping in P. M. Kelly's papers, in Ralph Sanford Kelly's possession.
- [28] *Ibid.*
- [29] R. Raymond Green and Sterling Callahan, "German Missionaries Ask More Tolerance Viewpoint," 6 December 1938, newspaper clipping in P. M. Kelly papers.
- [30] Bingham Oral History, 4.
- [31] *Ibid.*, 29.
- [32] *Ibid.*, 2.
- [33] Russon Oral History, 6.
- [34] Gilbert W. Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany between 1840 and 1970* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1970), 87.
- [35] Dale Clark, "Mormonism in the New Germany," *Deseret News*, 9 December 1933, 3.
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