

GETTING ESTABLISHED

Being invited to address the student body at Brigham Young University was an experience unlike any he had ever had. On this day in January 1961, most of the school's eleven thousand students were in attendance. Elder Tuttle felt right at home because many of the students there were graduates of the Church's seminary system. His former seminary and institute supervisor, William E. Berrett, introduced him, and the introduction was warm and personal. Though it was a formal talk, the words flowed naturally. He felt comfortable talking to students. He was back in front of the classroom, though this classroom, the Smith Field House, was somewhat larger than seminary classes.

He was talking to the largest audience he had faced since his return from South and Central America, and he hoped to

make an impact. The preparation was not particularly difficult because he had been thinking of the subject for several months. The talk would be a summary of his feelings and thoughts since returning to the United States. His topic was how the gospel changes lives, and his focus was the role of missionary work in the Church. He wanted to impress upon the minds of these young students how faithful missionaries had brought the gospel into the lives of new converts. He told stories and gave examples of how Latin American converts were different after joining the Church. He touched on the social conditions he found in South America, which he characterized as “so very different,” and suggested the need for the gospel to enter the lives of the people so those conditions could be reversed. Finally he made a call for the young people in attendance to go on missions.

Two aspects of Elder Tuttle’s talk were interesting in light of what would be happening in his life for the next four years. He used a phrase of President William Grant Bangerter of the Brazilian Mission when he suggested the Church had entered into a new era of missionary work. That new era was not because of better missionaries or improved teaching techniques. The reason for the change was that the Spirit of the Lord was being spread across the earth in greater abundance and more people touched by that Spirit were joining the Church.¹

Elder Tuttle also described a visit he had with a missionary who referred to the growth of the Church in England during the early years of the Church when the Apostles, in particular Wilford Woodruff, had such great success. After the missionary left, Elder Tuttle contemplated the growth of the Church during the mission of these early Apostles and thought, “Well, why not? Why cannot the missionaries today do the same thing they did years ago? They do go forth with power. They

1. The term “new era” was used in other parts of the Church before this time. President David O. McKay used the term in the dedication of the London Temple (Gregory A. Prince and William Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005], 236–67).

work. They pray, and the Lord touches the hearts of the honest-hearted people in the world.” That challenge of increasing the success of missionary work to the level of the early days of the Church stayed with him during his years in South America. He left Brigham Young University invigorated by the spirit of the students and determined to work harder in expanding the Church in South America.²

Returning to South America

After coming home from his tour of South America, Elder Tuttle returned to the general routine of a General Authority—meetings, interviews, and weekend stake conferences. He continued working in the Missionary Department with Elder Gordon B. Hinckley.³ But things had changed for him. His experiences in Latin America had invigorated him and focused his attention on what needed to be done. His talks in almost all the stake conferences he attended had something to do with missionary work and the Church in South America. He had several frank discussions with President Henry D. Moyle and Elder Hinckley about the direction missionary work needed to go. During one of these meetings, he was informed unofficially that he might be returning to South America to direct the work there. He also worked hard to finish his detailed report to the First Presidency about the trip, but it took more time than expected, as did the many things he was doing at home. In late January, Sister Tuttle typed the report and recorded in her

2. A. Theodore Tuttle, “The Power of the Gospel,” in *Speeches of the Year* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 1961), 3.

3. Elder Tuttle describes his first meeting with Elder Gordon B. Hinckley after returning from South America. He responded to the question of how the trip was by, “‘Wonderful.’ And just in a joking way he (Elder Hinckley) said, ‘How would you like to go back?’ I said, ‘Wonderful, I would be delighted.’ He said, ‘You would?’ I said, ‘Yep.’ He said, ‘Did President Moyle talk to you?’ ‘No.’ He (Elder Hinckley) expressed some concern that I was so willing and evidently committed to go” (A. Theodore Tuttle, interview by Gordon Irving, 1977, transcript, 16, James Moyle Oral History Program, Church History Library, Salt Lake City).

diary, “Finished South American report. Ted finished working on manger.”⁴

His routine changed on March 14, 1961, when President Moyle called him into an early-morning meeting and asked him to return to South America for a quick one-month tour that included conducting a mission presidents’ conference. He quickly sent letters to the mission presidents and began preparing for the trip. On this trip he would be alone and could plan his own agenda and schedule, which he appreciated. There was, however, a problem. Sister Tuttle was in the eighth month of her seventh pregnancy, and Elder Tuttle would return just a couple of weeks before the scheduled birth. An early delivery would not be welcome.

On March 27, Elder Tuttle was up early working on ditches that would soon be filled for irrigation. He went into the house, showered, changed his clothes, and Sister Tuttle drove him to the airport. There to see him off were President and Sister Joseph Fielding Smith and Sister Geniel Jensen, who had just returned with her husband from presiding over the Uruguayan Mission. President Smith was there to encourage Elder Tuttle. A stopover in New York City included a day of missionary meetings, and then he was on his way back to Brazil. Met at the airport in Rio de Janeiro by President Bangerter, they had a quick visit with John Moors Cabot, American ambassador to Brazil, and then he flew to São Paulo. He was in familiar territory and liked how he felt, writing, “It is good to be here.”⁵

The missionary meetings were fruitful, and he was pleased with the progress being made, writing, “A marvelous work is going forth, with great young men.” His visit to the Brazilian South Mission left him somewhat concerned: “Elders much exercised in work, but not in spirit. Tried to help may have of-

4. Marné Tuttle, diary, January 31, 1961; copy in Marné Tuttle’s possession.

5. A. Theodore Tuttle, calendar diary, March 29, 1961; in Marné Tuttle’s possession. Elder Tuttle kept small calendar diaries where he made brief notations regarding his activities. They often include abbreviations and are occasionally difficult to decipher. There is one for each year.

fended. Much, much work done, but with not enough results.”⁶ Then he went on to Montevideo, Uruguay, where he had a different work to do. He spent several days looking at land where the mission home for the Uruguayan Mission would be constructed. He also looked for a house where his family would live while waiting for that new home to be constructed.

A major concern was where to establish the headquarters of the South American Mission. It was an important decision because it was not just a question of where he would live, but where the center of the Church in South America would be. He was looking for land not only for mission homes but also offices and, he believed, a future temple. Peru and Chile were not options because of their distance from the strength of the Church in Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina. Brazil had a large membership, strong leaders, and two missions but was the only Portuguese-speaking country in the region. Argentina and Uruguay were the two countries that were seriously considered.

Uruguay was centralized between the two strong areas of the Church, Brazil and Argentina, and was a logical choice geographically, though not the best in terms of accessibility. Most flights from Uruguay to the rest of Latin America went through Buenos Aires. And as Elder Tuttle was to find out later, that caused serious inconveniences.

Political instability of the countries was an important factor. Church leaders in Salt Lake City were concerned about the political activities of socialist groups in most of the countries of South America. Fidel Castro, the new communist dictator in Cuba, was suggesting that his Cuban-style revolution would soon spread to all of Latin America. Argentina had gone through several years of social and governmental upheaval as governments appeared and disappeared with regularity. The government of Juan Perón (1945–55), with its strong populist appeal to the working classes, had split the country. There was

6. A. Theodore Tuttle, calendar diary, April 4, 1961.

apprehension that a socialist or communist takeover would occur in Argentina. There was even greater concern for Brazil's political stability. After five relatively stable years under the presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek (1956–60), the country had elected Jânio Quadros, former governor of the state of São Paulo, who had strong independent tendencies and appeared to be moving the country to the political left. His resignation after seven months in office and the succession of the presidency to his socialist vice president, João Goulart, had seriously destabilized Brazil.

Uruguay, on the other hand, had experienced democratically elected governments for more than seventy years, and its political stability was a hallmark. The political elite had accepted the ideas of José Batlle y Ordóñez, president during 1903–7 and 1911–15, who suggested that Uruguay could have a similar role in South America as Switzerland did in Europe, maintaining political stability, democracy, and independence from its two large and powerful neighbors. His influence helped Uruguay remain relatively peaceful, and the country had a democratic electoral transfer of political power through 1973. Though the political system was showing signs of weakness during the sixties, Uruguay still appeared the safest country to establish the headquarters of the Church. Furthermore, Uruguay had adopted progressive social laws early on in its history, including one that excluded the Catholic Church from the political structure of the country. This encouraged complete freedom of religion and a strong tradition of religious independence from the dominant church, which did not exist in Argentina and Brazil; therefore, persecution against non-Catholic groups was minimal. If Elder Tuttle wanted to center the Latter-day Saint Church in a stable place, Uruguay was the most logical choice.⁷

7. For a general discussion in English of Batlle, see Milton Vanger, *The Model Country: José Batlle y Ordóñez of Uruguay, 1907–1915* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1980).

Sister Tuttle had her own ideas about where the mission home should be located. She had spent time with Geniel Jensen, who had just returned from Uruguay. Sister Jensen's advice was not only that Montevideo was the most livable large city in South America, but that a special section of the city was ideal for raising her young family. On the outskirts of Montevideo, on the way to the airport, was the beautiful exclusive suburb of Carrasco. Sister Tuttle saw pictures of the British school her children would attend and liked what she saw. In a letter to Elder Tuttle, she said Carrasco "would be ideal for living with a family—where they would have a little room to play—not on streets as they do if they live in Montevideo." Carrasco's proximity to the school, the airport, a supermarket, and its easy access to buses made it attractive. She added, "Sounds like it is worth looking into!"⁸

Elder Tuttle agreed. He had already identified a large piece of ground on a small hill in Carrasco, which he thought would be a perfect site for the home, offices, and eventually a temple. He made an offer for the land which was tentatively accepted: "We (I) just bought (we hope) a piece of land for 167,000 without authority—which I hope we get later." On April 19 he requested permission to buy the land: "I called SL City to recommend purchase of a Temple site." Before leaving Uruguay, he was able to find a home in the same area for his family to live while waiting for the new mission home to be constructed.⁹

The primary purpose of Elder Tuttle's visit to South America was to hold a conference with the five mission presidents. This

8. Marné Tuttle to A. Theodore Tuttle, April 3, 1961; in Marné Tuttle's possession. For a description of Carrasco, see Denise Caubarrère and others, *Carrasco: el misterioso encanto de un barrio* (Uruguay: Noctua, Diseño y Arquitectura, 1998).

9. Marné Tuttle to A. Theodore Tuttle, April 8, 1961; and A. Theodore Tuttle, calendar diary, April 19, 1961. Mission leaders had that piece of property in mind for some time. Elder Cecil Millett, one of the early missionaries in Uruguay in the late 1940s, remembers that while driving with President Frederick G. Williams, the first Uruguayan Mission president, they passed that area, and President Williams suggested a temple would be built on that exact property (Cecil Millett, interview by Mark L. Grover, October 2, 2001, Hermann, Utah; copy in author's possession). A temple was eventually built on the property and dedicated on March 18, 2001.

type of gathering became a trademark of his administration in South America. At the conferences he coordinated work and encouraged the exchange of ideas. These meetings were also important to the mission presidents because they could gather, get new ideas, and renew their spirit. The mission presidents and their wives who assembled for the conference were the same people he had visited on his tour with President Smith: Asael T. Sorensen and William Grant Bangerter from Brazil, C. Laird Snelgrove from Argentina, J. Thomas Fyans from Uruguay, and J. Vernon Sharp from Peru.

One of the first acts of business was to announce that Elder Tuttle and his family would be coming to South America because Elder Tuttle was to be the president of the South American Mission. This news was met with sincere appreciation. The geographical isolation that the mission presidents felt would significantly decrease with his presence. Elder Tuttle then gave a brief but important summary of the conference's goal. President McKay had given their marching orders: missionary work was again to be the most important and primary focus of the Church. All other activities were to assist in the spread of the gospel.

Second, Elder Tuttle showed the type of administrator he would be. He was not coming with a set program to be established in all the missions. He encouraged sharing of ideas, saying, "There are no original ideas. All of us should copy anything we want from anyone else." He wanted certain principles followed but not all the same rules: "We can have uniformity without being identical."¹⁰

The morning discussion included wide-ranging topics. The discussion went from the living conditions of the missionaries to the training of mission presidents. They discussed details such as ways missionaries could eliminate diarrhea, the type of

10. Information and quotes come from minutes of the meeting that were copied and given to each of the mission presidents entitled, "Minutes of a meeting held April 8, 9, and 10, at Montevideo, Uruguay under the direction of President A. Theodore Tuttle"; copy in author's possession.

light globes to use in missionary quarters, and ways to limit the amount of money spent by missionaries on souvenirs. Elder Tuttle said little and allowed free-flowing conversation between the mission presidents. These details may have seemed trivial but were important elements of a good functioning mission. The afternoon meeting included a discussion of proselyting techniques, and again Elder Tuttle remained quiet. Mission presidents gave brief reports of successful programs in their missions; they discussed beneficial techniques and answered questions.

The second day of the meetings continued much the same, but the discussion of member organizations and public relations activities received the most attention. Elder Tuttle still said very little. President Bangerter was not completely satisfied with his methodology: "President Tuttle merely guided the program, taking not too much part in it and thus prolonging everything considerably." The third day, however, was different. Elder Tuttle actively led the discussion because he recognized a serious problem that needed to be resolved, the translation of Church manuals and instructions into Spanish: "Another marvelous day with missionary problems. Hard meetings on translations etc., but much accomplished."¹¹ The basic problem with translation was the lack of centralization. Elder Tuttle said it was a waste of time for each mission to do its own translation of Church manuals and teaching materials. His solution was to organize the five missions and give assignments to each mission for translating all materials for the individual organizations. It was not an easy problem to rectify, but this cooperative idea functioned well during his time in South America. The meeting was adjourned, and the mission presidents went home, pleased with all that occurred.

Elder Tuttle finished his mission tour and returned to the United States. His goal had been to determine what was

11. William Grant Bangerter, diary, April 9, 1961; copy in the Church History Library, Salt Lake City; and A. Theodore Tuttle, calendar diary, April 10, 1969.

happening rather than to direct. In a letter to Elder Boyd K. Packer, he expressed gratitude that some of the insecurities he felt about his assignment to go to South America had decreased: “This has been a very productive visit thus far. I am glad I came. The feelings of apprehension, which I had about coming, and this particular assignment, have vanished. I’m grateful to that and know Who to thank.”¹² He also indicated his satisfaction with the mission presidents’ meeting in a letter to President Moyle: “There was a mutual exchange of ideas that benefitted everyone. All were grateful for the privilege of meeting together and hoped it would become a regular program.” He echoed President Moyle’s own feeling about the potential for growth in Latin America and suggested the necessity for close supervision: “I am thrilled with the prospects that lie before us. There is a great spirit in these missions, and now is the time to coordinate and unite them.”¹³

Preparations

Elder Tuttle returned to Utah on April 27. The following day he noted in his diary, “Stayed home, worked and caught up on things. Good to be home.”¹⁴ Two weeks later, on May 10, he was rubbing his wife’s back and comforting her during the labor of their seventh child and fourth boy, Boyd, born shortly after midnight on May 11. Later the next evening, Elder Tuttle came by the hospital with a letter from the First Presidency officially calling the family to South America to preside over the

12. A Theodore Tuttle to Boyd K. Packer, April 14, 1961; copy in Marné Tuttle’s possession.

13. A. Theodore Tuttle to Henry D. Moyle, April 13, 1961; copy in Marné Tuttle’s possession.

14. A. Theodore Tuttle, calendar diary, April 28, 1961.

missions. It was not a surprise but still a relief to finally get the letter.¹⁵ They were to leave Utah on August 1.

Elder Tuttle was ready and anxious to go. So was the rest of the family, but there were apprehensions. Sister Tuttle's thoughts on May 12 were insightful: "I pray I get strong quickly to do all that is necessary in preparation for this great *move* and adventure! We have felt that this was coming and the children are all for it. Now it can be announced & we really must get in & dig. So many things to do—pictures, shots, passports, clothing, trunks, what to take, what to do with that which we leave, rent or sell the home, if possible."¹⁶

Their oldest son, David, was ready to go. He was seventeen and soon to be a senior in high school. He was ready for a change. He said, "I left my horse, my car, and my girl." Fourteen-year-old Diane was excited for the adventure. She would miss friends, but that was not a problem. She had more informational concerns, which she had written to her father while he was in South America: "I have been wondering how they dress down that way, like how are the trends in skirts, to the ankle or to the knee. . . . Like maybe how would the place we would live in be like, sort of in the city or out away from it all?"¹⁷ The younger children were not too sure what was happening, It was to be an exciting adventure for the entire family.

There were complications beyond the normal activities of a large family. Sister Tuttle just had a baby, and Elder Tuttle would remain busy with his assignments as a General Authority. But they had a great number of friends and family

15. A Theodore Tuttle, calendar diary, May 12, 1961; and Marné Tuttle, diary, May 12, 1961. Even as late as May, first after a meeting with President Moyle, there had been questions about his going: "Good to have the assoc. I have. Presi. M., (Moyle) a great man. Looks a little more doubtful that we'll go to So. Amer." (A. Theodore Tuttle, calendar diary, May 1, 1961).

16. Marné Tuttle, diary, May 12, 1961.

17. David Tuttle, interview by Mark L. Grover, February 22, 2001, Lehi, Utah; copy in author's possession. Diane Tuttle to A. Theodore Tuttle, April 14, 1961; copy in Marné Tuttle's possession.

who helped. Sister Tuttle's parents lived close by in American Fork, and they and other members of her family were often at the house helping. Elder Tuttle also had many friends from the seminary and institutes who were willing to assist and friends from the Grove Ward and their neighbors were available when needed. All were aware of the importance of this call for the Church and were willing and ready to be of assistance. Their help to the Tuttles was a way of serving the missionary program of the Church. Friends and family were appreciated more than normal in times of need such as this.

First Council of Seventy

On June 9, 1961, the First Presidency made an announcement that was essential for Elder Tuttle to perform his designated administrative functions in South America. The seven members of the First Council of Seventy would be ordained high priests. It was a critical change in policy that was to foresee numerous administrative moves in the Church. Historically, the responsibility of the Seventy was related to missionary work, so each ward in the Church had a few seventies who administered missionary work in the local units. That duty at the General Authority level was held by the First Council of Seventy, occupied by seven men. Their responsibilities, however, were somewhat unclear as Elder Tuttle found out when he was called. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were special witnesses of Christ with responsibility for administration of the entire Church, including missionary work. As a result, there was ambiguity over exactly where responsibility for missionary work resided. The delineation of responsibility was to occur within the next few years in the Quorum, and Elder Tuttle would see a refining of the Seventy's assignments, part of

which included his own assignment to work in the Missionary Committee of the Church.¹⁸

Before this change, members of the First Council of Seventy were unable to perform many administrative activities of the high priests. They could make visits to stake conferences, but if reorganizations had to occur, their priesthood did not allow them to make those changes. They had to be accompanied by a member of the Quorum of the Twelve or the Assistants to the Twelve. These restrictions hampered the work of the Seventy and complicated the administration of the Church. The decision to ordain members of the First Council of Seventy as high priests was fortunate for Elder Tuttle because it occurred before going to Latin America. It meant that he would have, in his words, “authority to set the Church in order wherever we are called to go.” Elder Tuttle agreed with the change: “It has caused quite a stir & some comment as to the implications it involves. For me, I am pleased and happy with whatever the Brethren set forth as policy.”¹⁹ Elder Tuttle was ordained a high priest on July 28, 1961.²⁰

World Mission Presidents’ Conference

A second event was also significant for Elder Tuttle. In June 1961 the first worldwide mission presidents’ conference was held. Mission presidents from around the world were brought to Salt Lake City for a week of training and meetings. All the presidents and their wives from South America attended, where they met with A. Delbert and Mable Palmer, the newly called mission president to Chile.

At the opening session of the conference, President McKay suggested the world was in a state of conflict between the forces of evil and the Church. To do battle against Satan, the mis-

18. Alan K. Parrish, “Seventy,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1301–3.

19. A. Theodore Tuttle, missionary diary, June 12, 1961; in Marné Tuttle’s possession
20. A. Theodore Tuttle, calendar diary, July 28, 1961.

sionary program of the Church needed to function better than ever: “Mormonism, so-called, has reared an ensign to the nations and . . . invites the world to peace, to rest, to contentment.” The world could come to peace through the promises of the missionary program. President McKay then proceeded to give specific instructions on how missionaries were to do their work. It was obvious from the opening speeches that the Church leadership was interested in effective, coordinated, and complementary missionary work.²¹

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Quorum of the Twelve began his speech by discussing the purpose of the new mission supervisors, such as Elder Tuttle. This talk was meant to relieve mission presidents’ concerns over the role leaders like Elder Tuttle would have. Elder Lee described the meeting of the General Authorities where the decision was made to have mission supervisors. President McKay, after listening to the discussion, suggested that these men were being called as teachers: “It is an education more than an assignment of dictation.” Elder Lee then used the relationship between supervising elders and missionaries he saw during his recent tour of the Brazilian Mission with President Bangerter as an example. When the supervising elders visited the missionaries and compelled them to work, they were not successful. When the supervisors visited and observed but did not help, they also failed. The most success came when supervisors saw what was happening and then positively taught the missionaries their duties. Elder Lee said the relationship between mission presidents and the new mission supervisors would be similar: “We have left you too much by yourselves with too little help and direction—men with whom you could counsel. Now, recognizing this need, they are now giving you men of faith, men of tried and trusted worth, men of ability and devotion. . . . These General Authorities, who are now area presidents, do not come to dominate, but come to

21. *Mission Presidents’ Seminar, June 26, to July 5, 1961* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1961), 1:4–10.

work with you and to prayerfully hope that by a common faith and understanding we could accomplish some good.”²²

After describing the relationship between the mission president and their new supervisors, Elder Lee talked about the local Church organization. He stressed that the perfect organization was the stake organization and that missions needed to put leadership into the hands of local members by turning districts into stakes. Elder Lee then asked President J. Thomas Fyans, his longtime friend, to discuss how he was strengthening the local leaders in the Uruguayan Mission. He introduced President Fyans as “one of my boys, and I’m increasingly proud of him for almost a half of a lifetime of experiences together.”²³ President Fyans then gave an extensive description of his member program with many examples of how it has worked.

The South American missions were well represented in the seminar. Beyond President Fyans’s presentation on local member organizations, he gave a smaller talk on using athletics as a missionary tool. President Bangerter made two presentations. The first was an important discussion on his program of fellowshiping. He also discussed the use of street meetings as a proselyting tool. South America was often used as an example of how things should be done.

This landmark weeklong seminar reemphasized the importance of using missionaries for proselyting. It established Church growth and baptism as the primary goals of the missions. It enforced the concept that local leaders were responsible for administration of ecclesiastical units of the Church, not the missionaries. It decentralized mission supervision from the First Presidency and the Missionary Committee to area mission supervisors. And possibly most important, it provided methodology and direction for missionaries by introducing and

22. *District and Branch Administration in the Missions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Mission Presidents’ Seminar, Salt Lake City, Utah, June 26, 1961–July 3, 1961* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1961), 6–8.

23. *District and Branch Administration*, 27.

requiring the *Systematic System of Teaching* in all missions. The mission presidents from South America were pleased in part because they were already moving in the directions suggested.

President J. Vernon Sharp and his wife, Fawn, of the Peruvian Mission had come to the meetings with heavy hearts. They had three daughters who were either recently married or had young families. On April 22, during Elder Tuttle's visit to Peru, they learned that their second daughter, Darlene, had given birth to a stillborn son. They struggled with their inability to comfort their children because the children were so far away in Utah. That night Fawn "didn't have a very good night for thinking about Darlene."²⁴ For the Sharps, the announcement to attend the mission presidents' conference in Utah was a blessing that came at an opportune time. They could be home with their children and help—if only for a couple of weeks.

Unfortunately, the experience in Salt Lake City ended with a tragedy for the Sharps. The family was not telling their parents all that was happening. Less than a week before arriving in Salt Lake City they received a telegram from their son-in-law Verl, indicating that Darlene had been taken to the hospital and received a blood transfusion of nine pints. Fawn was upset and frustrated: "That sure seems a lot to me. . . . They don't any of them say just that she isn't well. It is hard for me to keep busy on things around here when I am so worried about her and about Susan too." On their trip to Utah they stopped in Michigan to visit their oldest daughter, Shirley, and learned that their youngest daughter, Susan, had given birth to a baby girl. When they arrived in Salt Lake City, they were met at the airport by family, including Darlene. Later that evening they were given the sad news that Darlene had leukemia. Fawn later said, "Vern and I didn't sleep at all—How can we face this again is more than we can understand."²⁵

24. Fawn Hansen Sharp, "Life History of Fawn Hansen Sharp" (n.p.: n.d.), April 22–23, 1961. The items are identified by date, not page number; Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

25. Fawn Hansen Sharp, mission diary, June 15, 1961, and June 24, 1961.

It was a difficult two weeks. The Sharps felt obliged to attend as many of the meetings of the seminar as they could, while they wanted to be with their daughter as much as possible. They attended meetings during the day and spent evenings with their family. A temple session with all the mission presidents on July 5 was very moving, and they offered a special prayer for the Sharps' daughter. Later that evening Darlene was taken back to the hospital. On July 7 they visited her in the afternoon, where she apologized, feeling she had "made such a mess for Daddy and I while we were in Salt Lake." They reassured her and told her they had been given permission to stay until she was out of the hospital: "She seemed to be relieved when I said we would stay with her." Her condition deteriorated rapidly, and later in the evening she passed away. The Sharps were distraught, of course, but felt at peace: "To see her at rest was a blessing. And we knew it was better than to see her suffer."²⁶

On July 10 all of the South American mission presidents and their wives joined with the Sharps for Darlene's funeral. Elder Lee, a close friend of the family, was one of the speakers. In a letter to Elder Lee, Elder Tuttle expressed his feelings: "It was not just an ordinary funeral sermon. What you said, and the spirit in which it was given that day, was a most remarkable manifestation of not only answer to prayer, but in a special way to me was a reaffirmation of the divinity of your calling."²⁷ The mission presidents returned to South America buoyed up by the messages and experiences of the seminar but sobered by the fragility of life.

26. Fawn Hansen Sharp, mission diary, July 7, 1961.

27. A. Theodore Tuttle to Harold B. Lee, November 30, 1961; copy in Marné Tuttle's possession.

Trip to Uruguay

The Tuttle family was to leave for South America three weeks after the conference, and things were getting hectic. Their home still had not sold. They tried first to sell it on their own and finally listed the home with a real estate agent. Five days before they left, it sold for several thousand dollars below their cost. They sold the newly constructed home and half the property, keeping most of the fruit trees and the original house that was on that property. That small home was rented to seminary teachers during the time they were in South America. Leaving their new home and friends in Pleasant Grove was not easy, and they wrote, “The friendships we made in Pl.G. have certainly been wonderful. I suppose we have *lived* as fully here as any place we have lived.”²⁸

On July 30, 1961, they had their farewell in the Grove Ward. Ben Whiting, bishop of the ward and friend from Manti, was a bit nervous with the large crowd and the number of dignitaries who attended. Before the meeting, Elder Tuttle learned over and said to him, “Oh relax, they’re just people just like you and me.” Besides the Tuttles, five General Authorities and Bishop Whiting spoke. Afterward, they had an open house at Elder Boyd K. Packer’s home.²⁹

On Tuesday, August 1, the family took a plane to New York. For the next nine days they obtained their visas and did some sightseeing. They picked up two Chevrolet station wagons for the missions in South America, visited Palmyra, New York, where they attended the Hill Cumorah Pageant, and went to Boston, Washington DC, Philadelphia, and New York City, visiting historic sites in between. Elder Tuttle visited with officials of the U.S. State Department and two Latin

28. A. Theodore Tuttle, missionary diary, August 19, 1961, and E. Dale LeBaron, “A Faith Promoting Experience with Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and Boyd K. Packer” (n.d.); copy in author’s possession.

29. Ben Whiting, interview by Mark L. Grover, June 12, 2000, Pleasant Grove, Utah, transcript, 12; copy in author’s possession.

American ambassadors to the United States. On August 11, 1961, at four p.m., nine members of the Tuttle family boarded the SS *Argentina*. They had forty-one trunks or lockers (two for the Fyanses), comprising over ten thousand pounds of luggage. Most of it was for the mission offices and homes, including two cars, refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, and so forth. As the Tuttles said, “And we thought all we’d take would be our clothes!” Setting sail at eight p.m., Elder and Sister Tuttle and their sons Bob and Dave stayed up past midnight to watch the Statue of Liberty fade into the distance. Sister Tuttle’s feelings were poignant: “I can believe it is happening to me now—but why *me*? And then, why not? So all is settled. We go to do our best to fulfill the assignment entrusted to us—*praying* for the Spirit of Heavenly Father to guide us & give us the strength to perform credibly for Him. We are all well.”³⁰

The trip was restful and enjoyable. The food was good, and there was much to do. They studied Spanish every morning. On Sunday they held their own Church meeting and attended a Protestant service. For a special Neptune Party, celebrating crossing the equator, Sister Tuttle made pumpkin costumes out of orange burlap-type material and green crepe paper. They called themselves “country bumpkins” and held a sign entitled “Utah’s Best Crop.” They won first prize in the costume contest. Marné wrote, “It’s almost like a honeymoon, only one baby with us in our room & time on our hands—at least a few minutes between meals & nursing, etc.”³¹

They stopped on August 21 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where they were met by the Bangerters, who took them to see the sights of the city, which Sister Tuttle described as “fairylend scenery.” Two days later they docked in Santos, Brazil, again met by President Bangarter, who drove them up the escarpment to the city of São Paulo, where they met Finn and Sarah Paulsen of the Brazil South Mission. They finally arrived in Montevideo,

30. Marné Tuttle, diary, August 11, 1961.

31. Marné Tuttle, diary, August 13 and 17, 1961.

Uruguay, on August 25. President and Sister Fyans and a group of missionaries greeted them with a sign, “Bienvenido



Tuttle family arrive in South America

a Presidente Tuttle y Familia.” One missionary was assigned to each child, and they passed through customs quickly but with only a small part of their baggage. It was a holiday, and they were not allowed to unload most of the equipment. Most of their bags went on to Buenos Aires in the boat, and the

captain promised to return to Uruguay when they could unload the rest of their luggage and go through customs. They were taken to their home, which had been prepared for the family by Sister Fyans and her daughters with “flowers on table, food in the refrigerator, even with the beds turned down. What a kind and thoughtful welcome.”³²

They were finally in South America after almost a year of anticipation and waiting. They were excited and ready to begin a very new and unique adventure in their lives. One major regret was that they had not studied Spanish “more diligently while still at home.”³³

Elder Tuttle immediately began to work. Within a month on October 8, 1961, he was in Santiago, Chile, where he presided over a conference creating the sixty-fourth mission of the Church, the Chilean Mission. Chile and Peru had been together in the Andes Mission for two years, and the growth of the Church in both countries warranted a new mission. His emotions were close to the surface as he thought of events leading up to this meeting. This was the first major event of his South

32. Marné Tuttle, diary, August 21 and 25, 1961.

33. Marné Tuttle, diary, August 31, 1961.

American presidency and represented the fulfillment of prophecy and promise. Elder Melvin J. Ballard in 1926 had stated



Members at Chilean Mission Organization

that there were to be many missions in South America, and Elder Tuttle was creating the seventh. His feelings were also poignant as he contemplated the physical beauty of Chile. Santiago is nestled in a beautiful valley close to the majestic Andes, an impressive sight that touched him every time he saw it. As he looked upon an audience of 483, one hundred of which had to stand because of a lack of seating, he thought about how different his arrival and reception was from that of one of his predecessors, Elder Parley P. Pratt, who came to Chile in 1851 and left after four months without baptizing one person.

Nineteenth-Century Missionary Work

For various reasons South America was never seen by nineteenth-century Church leaders as a place where the Church would have significant growth. The Church's first international proselyting activities were to Canada and England, where missionaries had great success. Expansion into other northwest European countries was equally successful. Converts from Europe came to America in great numbers throughout the nineteenth century, greatly strengthening the Church. But Church leaders knew that the gospel had to be preached to all the world, and Latin America was to have its chance. In 1851 Elder Parley P. Pratt received the assignment from President Brigham Young to preside over what was called the "Pacific Mission," which included the western coast of South America. After spending a few months in San Francisco, California,

Elder Pratt, his wife, Phoebe, and his missionary companion, Rufus Allen, boarded a ship for the city of Valparaiso, Chile, where preaching the gospel to Latin America would begin.³⁴

After a difficult and disagreeable trip that included bad food and bad company, the three docked at the beautiful port city of Valparaiso. It was a vibrant city with the hustle and bustle of the most active seaport in western South America. Chile, whose land was rich, supplied most of the food for the 1849 California gold prospectors. This energetic city was also a port stop for many Americans and Europeans who passed through the Strait of Magellan at the southern tip of South America on their way to the gold fields.

Elder Pratt had not counted on one thing: what he had come to do in Chile was illegal. The Catholic Church had been the official church in Chile since it was discovered and colonized by the Spanish. The Catholic Church was so influential that it had been able to get into the 1822 constitution of the new country. The constitution had a section declaring Catholicism the official religion and restricting the activities of other churches. Non-Catholic religions could operate if their members were immigrants or visitors, but they could not proselyte, and any missionary activity, including distribution of Bibles, was punishable by prison. Those conditions were so restrictive that when the Pratts' infant son passed away, they had difficulty finding a place for his burial. A special "cult," or non-Catholic, cemetery became the final resting place of Omner Pratt.³⁵

After four frustrating months in Chile, he again boarded ship and returned to Utah, lamenting the fact he had not gone to Peru, which had more relaxed laws regarding religious activities. He suggested to President Young that until the laws of

34. A. Delbert Palmer and Mark L. Grover, "Hoping to Establish a Presence: Parley P. Pratt's 1851 Mission to Chile," *BYU Studies* 38 (1999): 115–38.

35. Néstor Curbelo, *Historia de los Mormones en Argentina* (Buenos Aires: author, 2000), 5–7.

Latin America were changed to allow legal proselyting, it would be a very difficult area for the Church to be established.

During this era missionaries were sent to northern Mexico to further the work and to search for areas to colonize. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the absence of missionaries in South America again concerned Church leaders, who believed missionaries had to go to all the world to gather the elect.³⁶ They wanted to see if South America was ready for missionaries. Significant political changes had occurred in the seventy years since Parley P. Pratt had been in Chile, and most countries now had constitutions with provisions allowing for freedom of religion. That opportunity came in 1923, when Andrew Jenson, Church historian, requested permission to take a vacation to Latin America. Jenson, who had already traveled much of the world collecting information on the history of the Church region by region, wanted to go to a place he had never visited. He was an important leader in the Church whose counsel was often sought by the General Authorities.

In January 1923, Jenson left on what he described as an “educational” trip to eleven Central and South American countries.³⁷ He visited all the countries with large indigenous populations but had less than favorable experiences. This trip was not as pleasant as had been hoped. He was not particularly fond of the food and became sick. The poverty and living conditions of the people in the western part of South America concerned him. His positive feelings concerning the possibility of missionary work among the indigenous populations dimmed.³⁸

His attitude toward Latin America changed when he got to Argentina. Jenson said, “I had become quite interested in the

36. One example was a talk given in 1901 by Elder Brigham Young Jr., when he stated, “The eyes of the Twelve have been roaming over the habitable globe, and they have looked upon Turkey, Austria, Russia, and especially South America” in Conference Report, October 1901, 66.

37. Andrew Jenson, “On Way to South America,” *Improvement Era*, June 1923, 718.

38. Andrew Jenson, *Autobiography of Andrew Jenson* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1938), 547–76.

Argentine Republic which was so different to all the other South American Republics which I had visited so far.”³⁹ Contrary to what he experienced in the rest of Latin America, his inability to speak Spanish did not significantly hinder his visit. The capital city of Buenos Aires was a city of European immigrants that included a colony of Danes. Jenson himself was Danish. Buenos Aires was “very much like the large cities of Europe, the customs and habits having been copied from European conditions.” After spending two weeks there, he articulated his attachment to the city: “Leaving Buenos Aires . . . was almost like leaving home.”⁴⁰ His recommendation to President Heber J. Grant was to send missionaries to Argentina.⁴¹

Jenson’s recommendation did not immediately result in the opening of a new mission. The decision to send missionaries to Argentina occurred three years later, influenced by the presence in Buenos Aires of immigrants who had been baptized in Germany. Their presence meant that when the missionaries arrived, they would encounter a small congregation of the Church.

The opening of South America was considered so important that three General Authorities were sent to begin the mission. The leader of the group was Elder Melvin J. Ballard, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. His companions, members of the First Council of Seventy, were Rey L. Pratt, president of the Mexican Mission, and Rulon Wells, who spoke German. They left Utah in October 1925. Rey L. Pratt was not released from his position as president of the Mexican Mission, and for the six months he was away, a missionary directed the Mexican Mission.

Their experiences in South America were not as positive as hoped. The congregation they met was smaller than expected. A group of seven members was led by Wilhelm Friederichs, a

39. Jenson, *Autobiography of Andrew Jenson*, 561.

40. Jenson, *Autobiography of Andrew Jenson*, 569–70.

41. Andrew Jenson, “South American Mission,” in *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1941), 810.

dedicated German convert to the Church and recent immigrant to Argentina. The other members were his family and one of his missionary converts, Emil Hoppe. Several letters to Salt Lake City had informed Church authorities that a congregation was awaiting the missionaries with investigators ready for baptism. The first missionary work of the three General Authorities was to teach the investigators who had been gathered by Brother Friederichs. The process did not take long, and within a week six investigators were baptized, all recent immigrants from Germany. Church meetings were held in German, and a small congregation was organized.

Three weeks after their arrival, the three General Authorities gathered in the Tres de Febrero park near the center of Buenos Aires, dedicating South America for preaching the restored gospel. In his prayer Elder Ballard expressed gratitude for being chosen to come to Argentina “to search out the blood of Israel that has been sifted among the Gentile nations, many of whom, influenced by the spirit of gathering, have assembled in this land.” He also prayed that the gospel would be brought to the natives of the land to fulfill the prophecies of the Book of Mormon. He expressed appreciation for the call: “We are thankful that we are the bearers of these glad tidings to the peoples of the South American nations.”⁴²

The optimism of the first few weeks soon diminished as the reality of the situation in Argentina became apparent. After a week in Buenos Aires, Elder Wells, the only missionary who spoke German, became seriously ill and within a month returned to Salt Lake City. That left the missionaries in a strange and difficult situation. They had a small German-speaking congregation, none of whom spoke English or Spanish, presided over by two missionaries who spoke only English and Spanish. The situation was almost comical considering the long time it

42. A. Theodore Tuttle, “Manuscript History of the South American Mission,” December 25, 1925, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. The prayer is copied in Frederick S. Williams and Frederick G. Williams, *From Acorn to Oak Tree* (Fullerton, CA: Et Cetera Graphics, 1987), 23–24. A copy of the prayer is in appendix A.

took to communicate in Church meetings. When Elder Ballard spoke in English, Elder Pratt translated his words into Spanish to a young twelve-year-old girl who spoke a little Spanish, who then translated Elder Ballard's words into German for the rest of the congregation.

The language challenge was complicated by the demographics of Buenos Aires. The German immigrants were scattered throughout the city, and attempts to teach only the German speaking was difficult. Elder Pratt, in particular, realized missionary work would have to be done in Spanish and focused on the Spanish and Italian populations, because they represented by far the largest segment of the population in this city of immigrants. The two missionaries worked hard for six months but were able to convert only one Spanish woman just before they left. This was not considered a huge success because they passed out close to 11,000 pamphlets and held 234 meetings. Elder Ballard, upon returning Utah, recounted, "It was the most difficult piece of missionary work that I have undertaken."⁴³

The leaders in Salt Lake City had humble expectations of the missionary effort in South America. At the farewell dinner for Elders Ballard, Pratt, and Wells, President Heber J. Grant expressed his modest hopes at achieving success: "They are sent with the belief that it is a duty that we owe to the whole world to preach the gospel to all nations whatever the result may be. . . . I shall be satisfied if we only make a humble start in that southern land."⁴⁴

The successor to Elder Ballard as president of the South American Mission was Reinhold Stoof, a recent German immigrant to Salt Lake City who spoke no Spanish. He was to spend ten years in Argentina and successfully open a mission in Brazil among German immigrants who had established numerous colonies in the southern three states.

43. Melvin J. Ballard, in Conference Report, October 1926, 38.

44. "Banquet, Program and Reception," *Improvement Era*, November 1925, 172.

Elders Ballard and Pratt left Argentina in July 1926. Before leaving, Elder Ballard in a testimony meeting in the Rivadavia Branch on June 30, 1926, prophesied concerning the way the Church would develop in South America: “The work of the Lord will grow slowly for a time here just as an oak grows slowly from an acorn. It will not shoot up in a day as does the sunflower that grows quickly and thus dies. Thousands will join. It will be divided into more than one mission and will be one of the strongest in the Church. The work here is the smallest that it will ever be. The day will come when the Lamanites will get the chance. South American Mission will be a power in the church.”⁴⁵

That prophecy was important to Elder Tuttle. The history of the Church in South America had grown just as Elder Ballard had predicted—very slowly. Elder Tuttle now believed the time had come for the second part of the prediction to come true, which was the strengthening and growth of the oak. One of his first acts as mission president was to fulfill one part of Elder Ballard’s prophecy: organize another mission, this one in Chile. The second would be to focus on missionary work and converting the many who were prepared to accept the gospel. To help with missionary work, he would turn to President Bangerter of the Brazilian Mission.

45. This quote was taken down by James Vernon Sharp, president of the Andes Mission who at the time was a recently arrived missionary to Argentina: “Apostle Ballard gave a prophecy which I wrote up on the typewriter and put in my card index file.” I have quoted directly from his version which is quoted in James Vernon Sharp, *Life History of James Vernon Sharp*, a privately printed family history done in 1988; copy in author’s possession. The published version of the prayer has a couple of slight changes that improved the grammar of the Sharp version. It is found in Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1949), 100.