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Culture, Cohesion, and Conceptualizing the Sacred

Following on the heels of Walter van Beek's anthropological approach, John Hoffmann provides a more sociological approach (though the reader may find Durkheim again influencing the understanding of ritual). In particular, John addresses the role of ritual in defining a religious society, particularly its function in establishing a sense of community. Along the way, he reveals one of the challenges of a growing, global church—the tension that is created when the ritual structure of the church interacts with a native ritual structure. He does so by looking at the ritual experience of Japanese Latter-day Saints and the relationship to the native ritual structure of Shintoism.   —DB

Rituals define and promote social groups in modern society by animating shared beliefs, establishing moral guidelines, and demarcating the boundaries of these groups by demonstrating their existential and material differences from other groups. Traditionally, ritual was a key concern of anthropologists as they sought to understand less-developed social units, such as when Bronislaw Malinowski spent a year in the early 1900s observing the ritual behaviors of Trobriand Islanders, whereas sociologists borrowed liberally from anthropology to assess individual and group behaviors in modern societies. However, the study of ritual has suffered from a lack of a clear definitional base. In fact, some scholars say that the

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task of defining the boundaries and characteristics of rituals is so fraught with problems that they are willing to abandon the term altogether. Others suggest that we should not limit ourselves to a single definition of ritual. Rather, there is a variety of potential definitions that may apply to particular groups or to particular times. The task for scholarly work on rituals, according to these observers, is to conceptualize better those behaviors engaged in by social groups that may fall under a general rubric labeled *ritual*.

Much of the social scientific attention to ritual has focused on religious behavior. In fact, classic sociological studies published in the early 1900s tended to elevate ritualistic behavior so that it literally defined religion. Subsequent years saw numerous sociologists attempting to broaden this line of thinking. For example, some expanded the boundaries of ritual to include virtually any social interaction that individuals and groups engage in.[1] Other scholars, however, continued to focus on investigating rituals among specific religious groups. An important goal has been to examine certain types of religious behaviors so that the social organization and cultural underpinnings of these groups can be understood better. Although this second direction has motivated studies of Catholic Mass, evangelical spirituality, mainline Protestant worship services, bar mitzvahs, and Hindu string ceremonies, among other ritual behaviors, it has only indirectly influenced research on the behaviors of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS).

The goal of this chapter it to, first, provide a general background review of social scientific interest in ritual.[2] This requires, initially, a brief sojourn into definitions, including an attempt to outline how ritual is generally defined by this scholarly community. After developing the contours of religious rituals, I then address how an academic understanding of ritual may help us appreciate some of the social and cultural dynamics of the LDS community. I certainly do not claim to offer any novel or unique observations of LDS rituals; rather, my goal is to help contextualize some presumed rituals given the way that social scientists have structured their research on this important topic. Some of my field research in an LDS branch in Hokkaido, Japan, is used to provide a few examples of how rituals are perceived by Japanese members of the Church.

The Contours and Contexts of Ritual

Early studies. The study of ritual, at least in the sociological community, finds its roots in the research of one of the discipline's founding fathers, Emile Durkheim. In his classic treatise, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim, the main forebear of the functionalist school of sociology, wished to understand how religious action plays a role in the overall organization of society.[3] In other words, how does religion—its behaviors and beliefs—contribute to the overall health of society? By evaluating the numerous nineteenth-century anthropological studies of religion in several "primitive tribes," especially those conducted in Australia, Durkheim concluded that religious action—in particular, the rituals that formed the basis for so much religious behavior—functions as the source of many other social institutions (e.g., education, public safety), provides the moral basis of communities, animates beliefs, and furnishes a "collective consciousness" that holds social groups together, a form of conceptual cement.[4] Durkheim wrote, "We can say that nearly all the great institutions were born in religion. For the principal features of collective life to have begun as none other than various features of religious life, it is evident that religious life must necessarily have been an eminent form and, as it were, the epitome of collective life. If religion gave birth to all that is necessary in society, that is so because the idea of society is the soul of religion."[5] In brief, then, religion has the practical effect of providing social solidarity so that societies may function as a collective whole.

The main source of renewal of a collective consciousness is religious ritual, which Durkheim defined as "particular modes of action"[6] that serve as "rules of conduct that prescribe how man must conduct himself with sacred things."[7] These sacred things may be various items but in essence are objects that are held at length as somehow apart from the mundane world of humans. They may be concrete objects, images, or words. Sacred things are usually the focus of religious rituals but also may be things that are generally treated with awe, respect, and forbiddance (e.g., pictures of the Prophet Mohammed, LDS garments, Catholic rosary beads). Moreover, Durkheim concluded that the sacred activities

apparent in religious ritual and sentiment are actually, at a fundamental level, the worship of the social group.

This view of ritual is not simply a lofty conceptualization but rather links individuals to their most important social groups. Rituals concretize, for the individual, the social boundaries of the group by establishing its moral guidelines[8] and generating a sense of "us" versus "them." As observed by Catherine Bell, "Ritual is a means by which individual perception and behavior are socially appropriated and conditioned. In Durkheim's model, the ritual activity of cult constitutes the necessary interaction between the collective representations of social life (as a type of mental or metamental category) and individual experience and behavior (as a category of activity)."[9] Among individuals, rituals may also constrain or motivate certain behaviors, especially if they are linked to some sacred object (e.g., a person's body or the Sikh holy book, the Adi Granth), thus serving a social control function.

In the intervening years, much scholarly attention to ritual has drawn on Durkheim not only to define what ritual is but also to describe what ritual does. The notion that rituals construct and reinforce social solidarity is easily the most common functional view.[10] Unfortunately, the assumption that they serve this function has become so common in sociology that it has dissuaded the study of ritual; a much larger body of sociological research has examined religious institutions and beliefs. This research focuses not solely on what ritual does but also on what ritual is and how it is motivated by specific beliefs of religious groups.[11] Nonetheless, there are critical questions that one should ask that may cast doubt on Durkheim's ideas and those they have influenced. For example, how does ritual lead individuals to see their collective efforts as somehow external, in other words, as attributable to God or some other supernatural being?[12] Although not all religious rituals have this type of effect, Durkheim and his progeny tended to emphasize this connection rather than other explanations for ritual behaviors. What role do specific religious beliefs play in ritual? Durkheim and others assumed that beliefs are a consequence of rituals.[13] If this is true, and if myriad forms of ritual are similarly functional in the way they reinforce moral and social

ordering, why do we find functional effects of beliefs that vary across social groups?[14] It is unlikely that the causal direction runs only from rituals to beliefs; rather, it is clear that beliefs affect and provide structure for rituals and their consequences. Although there are many others, perhaps the most common critique is that some groups—especially those with political power or that have achieved social dominance—are able to define the morality of the group and thus set boundaries on which objects are sacred and the rituals that are acceptable. Thus it is important to consider the historical forces and dominant institutions that dictate ritual action and motivations.[15] The various conflicts that members of the Latter-day Saint faith found themselves embroiled in during the nineteenth century provide many examples of how oppositional groups were able to define the presumed sacredness of ideas and objects. For instance, opposition to plural marriage was used as an ideological touchstone among many influential nineteenth-century politicians to call for greater federal intervention in the Utah territories.[16]

Ritual as boundary work and rite of passage. In the years since Durkheim's seminal study, attention to ritual has sought to either broaden his ideas or take a different definitional approach even as some observers claim that, given the numerous types of activities that might be identified as ritual, seeking a singular definition is a fruitless exercise. Perhaps the most frequently cited examples of broadening Durkheim's ideas while keeping his general functional approach involve the work of anthropologists Victor Turner and Roy A. Rappaport. Although his approach changed over the years, Turner defined ritual early on according to its ability to set the boundaries for a well-defined community and prevent its disintegration into oppositional groups with different interests.[17] Rituals function to resolve social conflict by reminding community members of their shared moral stances. They provide a sense of what Turner termed *communitas*, or a community spirit infused with a sense of social solidarity and equality. This condition is in stark contrast to *societas*, or the more common status-based system prevalent in most social groups. The state of *communitas* is putatively status free, with a relief from social hierarchies as all community members share equally in a position that is

normally subordinate to sacred objects or beings. This plays a role similar to Durkheim's *collective effervescence*, which are highly emotional experiences that occur in group settings and, for Durkheim, link members together in a shared experience of mutual purpose.

Turner is also well known for adopting Arnold van Gennep's ideas about a specific form of ritual: the rite of passage. Rites of passage include three sequential stages: separation, margin, and incorporation or reaggregation.[18] In between these stages, participants often exist in a liminal state, where they are "neither here nor there."[19] Rituals, according to this view, identify and resolve situations of crisis that mandate some fundamental change, such as birth, death, and puberty; and they allow one to pass from one socially and biologically mandated condition to another. In a liminal state, members of the group may experience *communitas* as they engage in ritual action that changes them in some fundamental way.

Ritual as communication and performance. In subsequent writings, Turner redefined ritual as "a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests."[20] Two characteristics of this definition are particularly important. First, ritual is communication of a special variety. Second, the key purpose of this communication, at least from the actor's viewpoint, is to influence supernatural entities in an almost utilitarian manner. This is not unlike Rodney Stark's rational actor argument that religious behavior focuses on exchanges with gods.[21] For Turner, rituals are also performances that include most, if not all, community members as performers.[22]

Roy A. Rappaport has also been seen as an heir to Durkheim's model of ritual. In his posthumously published magnum opus, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Rappaport used the term ritual to "denote *the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers.*"[23] In other words, actors in these performances do not necessarily ascribe particular meanings to their actions, but may see them rather as having a broader purpose that benefits their group. He also argued that ritual creates the

sacred by transforming objects such as bread and water into something set apart. He then unpacked his denotation in minute detail. For our purposes, however, three characteristics of his definition are important. First, Rappaport maintained that rituals serve to evoke "*numinous experience[s], the awareness of the divine, the grasp of the holy, and the construction of orders of meaning transcending the semantic.*"[24] Second, ritual must include both formality and performance. By formality, he merely meant adherence to particular forms of action. In combination with an emphasis on performance, Rappaport seemed to exclude spontaneity or improvisational religious activities as ritual. As we shall learn, this emphasis is ripe for critique on at least a couple of grounds. Moreover, performance does not imply theater; rather, ritual as performance involves participation "in earnest" by members of a congregation that takes place in their world, rather than the fictional world of the stage. Third, consistent with Turner and many others, Rappaport argued that ritual is communication: "Special time and places may . . . distinguish ritual words and acts from ordinary words and acts. In ritual's time and place, words and acts that may be indistinguishable from those of everyday sometime take on special meaning. . . . In all religious rituals, there is transmitted an indexical message that cannot be transmitted in any other way and, far from being trivial, it is one without which canonical messages are without force, or may seem nonsensical."[25] In other words, communications about the most enduring aspects of nature are emphasized, since they are considered by actors to be transcendent, timeless, and holy.

In Rappaport's view, rituals not only provide recipes for acting within or guidelines for viewing the world. They also help to produce a sacred sphere for participants that is unique, real, and, most importantly, provides a sense of certainty. This sphere attenuates the turmoil that threatens to disrupt or annihilate the social order. In general, Rappaport, in contrast to Durkheim, took more seriously the position of participants in believing that their performance is effectual and communicates some timeless truth that exists outside of society.[26] Although there may be some functional component of ritual as a method of social cohesion, it also satisfies an innate human need to seek certainty, not just about nature but

also concerning one's purpose and destiny. Of course, Rappaport could not limit this understanding only to religious ritual since other forms, such as civic and political rituals, also serve to enhance social cohesion and provide a sense of the group's purpose and destiny.

It is clear from these views that several key social observers have shared the idea that ritual is a vital form of communication and performance.[27] Ritual also serves as a source of social cohesion and conflict resolution. At an extreme, it may even serve as a form of legitimated violence, especially when used to create such strong social boundaries that even minor offenses to the group must be responded to with aggressive action lest an unclean act or object disrupt the purity of the group.[28] And, although Rappaport emphasized the performative and formal nature of ritual, but excluded improvisation, it is evident that spontaneity is actually encouraged in some performance arenas. For example, many evangelical groups, although they often seem to eschew formalized ritual,[29] actually encourage spontaneity in various ritualized settings. Perhaps the best example of this involves *glossolalia*, which is more commonly known as "speaking in tongues." Discussed in Acts 2:4 ("And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance") and in several other New Testament passages, the practice of speaking in tongues is a common occurrence in Pentecostal churches, where it is seen as a primary form of communication with God.[30] Although the emotional build-up of Pentecostal meetings, which often includes music and high energy preaching, is part of the performance and formality of a ritual, the point at which participants begin to speak in tongues is often spontaneous even as it flows with the other events of the meeting. Another example might include prayer in informal settings, such as at one's home.

Ritual and emotion. Another essential characteristic of ritual involves emotion or emotional energy.[31] Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence focused on the high degree of emotionality promoted by many rituals. A description of a multiday religious celebration among the Australian Wollunqua that culminated in a frenzied dance illustrated for Durkheim the power of emotion: "It is not difficult to imagine a man

in such a state of exaltation should no longer know himself. Feeling possessed and led on by some sort of external power that makes him think and act differently than he normally does, he naturally feels he is no longer himself; . . . it is as if he was in reality transported to a special world. . . . It is in these effervescent social milieux, and indeed from that very effervescence, that the religious idea seems to have been born."[32] The intense emotions experienced during periods of ritual were thought to become embodied in sacred objects and influence shared group identity and beliefs among ritual participants. Others have extended this idea to more mundane social interactions. In fact, Randall Collins argued that what he termed "emotional energy" is a key element, as well as a result of, ritual behaviors.[33] The outcomes of these behaviors include group solidarity, symbols that represent the group, feelings of morality, and emotional energy: "a feeling of confidence, elation, strength, enthusiasm, and initiative in taking action."[34] Moreover, "persons pumped up with feelings of group solidarity treat symbols with great respect and defend them against the disrespect of outsiders, and even more, of renegade insiders."[35] Although it remains unclear how such heightened emotion becomes so routinely interpreted as engaging the supernatural or of being imputed with such social and cultural power, it is unmistakable that an important aspect of ritual is its emotional content that somehow infuses objects and thought patterns with a sacred status. Moreover, this content includes not only positive emotions, such as elation, but can also include negative emotions such as feelings of dread or severe guilt.[36]

Ritual as narrative. In addition to communication, performance, transformation, and emotional content, most religious rituals share several other characteristics. For example, an aspect that deserves particular attention is that rituals are storied or involve remembering: ritual participants regularly share stories that are made meaningful by placing them in the context of canonical texts and group-oriented language.[37] Rituals tell a story and communicate a moral message that depends on the group members' shared experiences. These stories are centered in a specific sacred imagery and iconography.[38] Ritual is a shared experience that relies on common narratives to place conceptual boundaries

around participants' experiences. The liturgies of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches are best understood by members of the faith communities; they provide a narrative message that members share during sacred meetings. Within the Latter-day Saint community, the bearing of testimonies or the creation stories recounted in temples are rituals that involve stories of a common faith and belief. Testimonies, in particular, typically involve a common narrative of belief in the Church and its leaders.

An emphasis on shared stories, or *interactional narratives*,[39] has begun to garner substantial attention in studies of religious groups. People tell stories using a language common to their group. New members of a group learn much about its identity and idiom through the interactional narratives that older or more experienced members use in day-to-day exchanges, in formal settings (including rituals), or in literature published by the group. Interactional narratives socialize members, and, just as important, establish boundaries for the group. Individuals tell stories so that they may know who they are and who they are not. They also tell stories to bring others into the group, to instruct them about expectations of group membership, and to strengthen social ties among group members. The storied nature of rituals is a key part of this socialization process. In Utah, for example, Pioneer Day teaches young people about a common heritage and that, even if they do not have pioneer ancestors, they can share in the ritualized importance of themes such as sacrifice and hard work.

The narratives of Christian religious groups serve these purposes, but also provide an additional attributational context by teaching members that their lives are part of a larger narrative that involves a relationship with God and a struggle to avoid evil. By tying their lives to a larger narrative about a redeeming power and an atoning sacrifice, members are drawn into an arena where the most enduring aspects of nature are emphasized, and where their actions may be considered part of a holy and transcendent experience. These narratives are found most powerfully in local congregations where sermons, rituals, or other interactions emphasize these stories and link them to individual lives and experiences.[40]

How does religious ritual differ from other social activities? Although various types of ritual have garnered much attention by social scientists, it is also important to consider that many forms of human behavior may appear as ritual, even mundane activities such as reading the morning newspaper or walking the dog.[41] Therefore, it is important to think about what differentiates religious rituals from other sorts of human actions. This may not have been seen as important to observers such as Durkheim because he did not think it possible to separate religious ritual from other forms of ritual in the "primitive societies" that attracted his interest, but modern society's institutions are much more differentiated. Thus it is important to at least attempt to distinguish religious ritual from, say, political or business rituals.

In his analysis of an evangelical church in South Carolina, Timothy J. Nelson provided a useful way to make this differentiation of ritual clear: "Rather than asking how, I, as a social theorist, should define ritual, I can simply ask how they—the . . . ritual-performing people of the world— define it. This definitional sleight of hand diverts the eye from the act itself to the cultural discourse surrounding the act and changes the question from 'what is ritual' to 'how are rituals successfully constructed in particular times and places?'"[42] In order to accomplish this, one must determine what it is about their ritualized religious action that distinguishes it from other actions and how they communicate to others that a ritual has begun. Moreover, Nelson fixes on an issue that has been underdeveloped—if not simply ignored—in previous studies of ritual: it is imperative that researchers take seriously the definitions and actions *ascribed by the believers to the rituals.* In his study, for example, the participants saw a difference in the intent of their worship service and in the identity of its participants. The people saw themselves gathering, literally, as God's children. Moreover, God was not just an entity existing far away or on some alternate plane of existence, but rather he was

> an active, specially present agent who manifests his Spirit in the service, often in powerful and dramatic ways. . . . The worship is a time and place for intimate communication between an almighty

all-powerful God and his devoted followers. This "specialness" is
signaled in myriad ways: overtly in the language of prayers, liturgy,
sermons, songs, and testimonies, but also symbolically through
bodily actions (genuflecting, kneeling, bowing of the head, fold-
ing of the hands, etc.), through the clothing of participants, . . .
and through the "props" associated with the service (the pulpit,
communion cups, grape juice and wafers, Bibles). All of these ele-
ments combine into an emphatic cultural statement that what
is happening here is not part of the ordinary, mundane world of
work, home, school, or street.[43]

In sum, then, an evaluation of the cultural content and purposes of ritual
should take seriously the narratives, beliefs, and discourse of the partici-
pants, rather than merely try to impute some strict sociological function
to their participation or try to explain away the beliefs as merely a con-
sequence of the ritual.

Some Observations of LDS Rituals

Most active members of the LDS Church would likely consider many
of their forms of religious behavior as rituals, even though some of the
definitional characteristics may bother them. There are certainly many
aspects of these behaviors that might be construed as performative, com-
municative, infused with emotional energy, and based in shared or inter-
actional narratives. In this section, I use the ideas discussed earlier to
provide some general observations of contemporary LDS rituals. These
observations are designed to give a flavor for how social scientific studies
of ritual might be used to fruitfully observe LDS ritual life and to encour-
age further research on LDS ritual. In the next section, I provide a couple
of empirical examples using information from a study of an LDS branch
located in Hokkaido, Japan.

Perhaps the most obvious examples of LDS rituals, the ones that have
garnered the most attention by scholars interested in the Church and its
theological and cultural content, involve temple work. Douglas J. Davies,
a keen anthropological and theological observer of the LDS Church,

situated the temple rituals as perhaps the most unique identifying marker of the Latter-day Saint community.[44] Temples serve as pivotal spatial markers of LDS identity, and participation in temple rites also reinforces this identity due to their communal nature and because they teach unique ideas that are found in no other temporal location. Temples are an organizational identity marker but also serve some members as an important component of individual notions of Mormon selfhood. They are a place of enduring communication about the most sacred aspects of life. They are also locales for transformation, narrative, and emotion (e.g., marriage and endowment ceremonies). In another examination of LDS rituals, Kathleen Flake observed that the LDS community believes that the establishment of temples (she specifies the Salt Lake Temple) fulfills Isaiah's prediction that "in the last days . . . the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains. . . . And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, . . . and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths" (Isaiah 2:2–3).[45] In particular, temple rites are believed to be a vehicle for teaching essential knowledge that is found in no other location and through no other medium.

Flake also emphasized the role that oral tradition plays in temple ritual. She claimed that there are two reasons for maintaining an oral rather than a written tradition in the temple. First, it protects the "perceived legitimacy" of the timeless truth of the rituals, even in light of changes in the sacred text. Second, it increases the ability of temple rituals to provide meaning to the sacred purposes involved therein. Although her second point is likely valid, since she later elaborated it by claiming that the temple performance enhances the social cohesion of the LDS community,[46] the first point falls into the same analytic trap as do many social scientific studies of ritual: it fails to grant sufficient legitimacy to the participants' position.[47] Many Latter-day Saints would argue that any changes in the oral tradition of the ritual were likely due to continuing revelation, rather than some reaction to modernity or to garner some practical effect.

In any event, the rituals that take place in the temple provide an interesting example of the commonly observed elements of religious

ritual: performance, narrative, emotion, social bonding, meaningful-ness, commitment, morality, and liminality. It is interesting to observe, for example, that LDS temple participation is perhaps the most liminal of any contemporary forms of ritual among Western religious faiths. Recall that the liminal stage of ritual involves a transition during which there is a period of *communitas* when social differences and hierarchies are no longer relevant. There are clearly numerous transitions that take place in the temple and its attending rituals. For example, *communitas* is emphasized by the similar clothing worn by participants and the lack of markers of worldly success. Several unique transitions take place only in the temple, such as eternal marriages and the sealing of family members for time and eternity.

A second LDS ritual that has gained limited attention by outside observers is testimony meetings. Davies argued that testimonies com-prise a key feature of Mormon identity and a good example of Mormon ritual practice.[48] He described in vivid detail (though it is rather mundane from the perspective of practicing Latter-day Saints) the performance aspect of a testimony:

> [The bearer of testimony] "takes the stand" and becomes the cen-tral focus. . . . The Latter-day Saint stands alone while others pay attention to what he or she says. It is the discrete individual who gives voice to a personal experience. The tone of voice is relatively quiet and not loud, the person's overall demeanour is restrained and, in a sense, passive. The very carriage of the body expresses a degree of humility which reflects the verbal message that the per-son is grateful for having received a certain kindness or encour-agement. The arms are certainly not raised. They remain down or are clasped in front of the speaker, or may be placed on the lectern in front of the speaker. . . . The voice often falters at some point of the testimony, often towards the close, as a mild wave of emotion chokes the free flow of expression. In some cases, the person may even shed a tear of thanks, joy, or gratitude. Such a sign helps a testimony to be received as authentic and coming from the heart.

> It is a visual and auditory statement to the other members of the
> group that genuine faith lies in the speaker. For the person bearing
> their testimony it is a moment of entering into a fuller identity as
> a Latter-day Saint.[49]

Although Davies was describing what might be considered an ideal
type—he has stereotyped the ritual to a certain degree—he clearly inter-
preted testimonies as periods of performance, heightened emotion, and
transformation. There is, moreover, a sense of common moral ground and
commitment to the Church in many expressions of testimony. Robert
Wuthnow observed that rituals normally act to inculcate a particular
moral stance.[50] By doing so, they help preserve the group's moral order
and thereby provide participants with norms and values that they share
and use to direct their lives. Many expressions of testimony serve this
purpose, especially as children and young people are encouraged to par-
ticipate, but also since the stories expressed from the pulpit usually have
a moral basis.

Another important set of rituals in the LDS community involves the
missionary experience. It is the main LDS ritual, in addition to baptism,
receiving the priesthood, and marriage, which is most consistent with
a rite of passage.[51] The young men and women who serve two-year or
eighteen-month missions are clearly engaged in various rituals that not
only involve sacred activities but also, in a sense, set them apart as sacred
embodied objects. Their experiences in the mission field also serve to
reinforce the essential role of ritual, from morning scripture study to
nighttime prayers. From the time they enter the Missionary Training
Center, their lives are compartmentalized and totalized by the mission-
ary experience. The missionary experience, especially in light of research
that shows that missions tend to lead to strong membership in the Church
even years after completion,[52] demonstrates the power of such a set of
rituals in the lives of young people. It is a lengthy period of marginal-
ity and social bonding. It also inculcates narratives that often take on
a sacred flavor as missionaries learn miraculous stories of the power of
faith or experience these events themselves. In addition, missionaries are

routinely expected to perform as they teach lessons to investigators and interact with people from various cultures.

Finally, there are rituals that take place in another sacred LDS sphere: the homes of its members. Activities such as family home evening, family prayer, and family scripture study are encouraged by the LDS Church. Most of the particular activities that take place during these rituals are consistent with several of the characteristics discussed earlier: narrative, performance, communication, emotion, and so forth. Taking a more individual-centered position, Loren Marks and David Dollahite, in a study of family rituals, characterized some similarities among LDS family rituals and the rituals of other faiths.[53] They pointed out, for example, that the time of some family rituals is transformed and made sacred by singing hymns among LDS families or lighting candles among Jewish families. One might also imagine an opening prayer as having a similar effect. According to Marks and Dollahite, family rituals help to restore order and reverence, especially when life seems particularly chaotic. Consistent with a Durkheimian approach, they concluded that family rituals promote family cohesion and connectedness. In brief, family rituals such as prayers and scripture reading reinforce the notion that one's family is sacred and one's home is a sacred place set apart from the profane aspects of the outside world.

Juxtaposing LDS and Japanese Ritual

In 1998 I conducted a small study of an LDS branch in Hokkaido, Japan. Details of this study are provided in publications by Hoffmann[54] and Hoffmann and Morgan.[55] One of the most intriguing particulars of this study was how Japanese members of the LDS Church perceived conventional Japanese rituals. After all, Japan is infused with numerous rituals, such as the *o-bon* festival that takes place in August of each year. During *o-bon*, special altars are placed in participants' homes that provide offerings to the souls of the deceased. Lanterns are placed in graveyards and Buddhist temples to guide the dead back to this earth. Many people also visit Shinto shrines in their hometowns during *hatsumōde*, the traditional New Year's festival that takes place in early January. Visitors pay respect

A *butsudan,* Buddhist household altar. (Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.)

to ancestors and *kami*, as well as pray for good fortune.[56] Various other festivals take place throughout the year; some are specific to particular towns and cities, such as the *Kabôsai* (a Shinto fire-prevention festival) studied by John Traphagen[57] or the various rituals in Kamakura city that were discussed by Satsuki Kawano.[58] Ritual spiritual healings and other practices are also common in many Japanese new religion movements (*shin-shukyo*).[59] Many social scientists who have studied these rituals maintain that they do not reflect any particular religious sentiment or belief but rather that they are traditions that continue to serve as a source of social solidarity for families and communities. McVeigh, who examined a Japanese new religion named *Sûkyô Mahikari* ("True Light Supra-Religion"), contended that participation in its ritualized performances served as a social control mechanism by solidifying members' positions

in the hierarchy of the group.[60] However, taking a position reminiscent of Wuthnow, Bell, and others, Kawano argued that the rituals she examined induce moral meanings by embodying through physical action a traditional moral order.[61]

In interviews with Japanese Latter-day Saints, we asked several about their participation in or views of Japanese rituals.[62] The members of the branch took a rather temperate view of these rituals. In general, they discussed their "traditional" aspects and did not see them strictly as religious behavior that was at odds with their LDS beliefs, practices, or identities. Although almost all of the Latter-day Saints we interviewed did not have a *butsudan* (a Buddhist household altar) or a *kamidana* (a Shinto "god" shelf) in their homes, most were not averse to these ancestrally linked practices. One member's home contained a *kamidana* because she thought it important that her children remember their grandparents
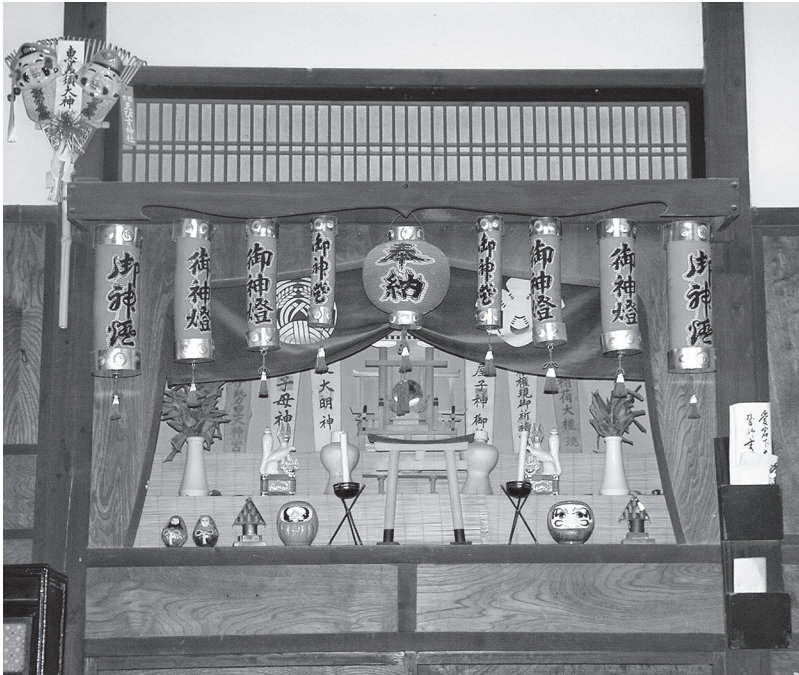
A *kamidana*, Shinto "god" shelf. (Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.)

and honor their role in the family. Tsuda Chieko (a pseudonym, like all the others hereafter) said that she did not have a *butsudan* because there was no room in her small apartment. Nonetheless, she half-jokingly said, "There are tiny *butsudan* on the market. I might end up buying one of those."

Other branch members discussed their participation in rituals but identified them as part of the general Japanese culture rather than as sacred practice. Moreover, there was a commonly reported distinction between LDS rituals that symbolized reverence of deity and Japanese traditions that served as recreational activities or as social gatherings. When we asked whether her family attends Shinto festivals, Abe Asako said:

> We go. I like the stands. I think we can enjoy our culture.
>
> Q: Do you go to the shrine on New Year's Eve?
>
> I used to, but not lately. It is too cold. But I think it's a member's choice. I'm flexible. It's a tradition. I think it is for fun. . . . Our church says not to be deceived, but I tend to be drawn to the traditional activities.

Her husband, Abe Teruo, saw his family's participation in festivals and pilgrimages not in terms of recreation, but rather as a way to show respect:

> Q: Do you visit your family grave during *o-bon*?
>
> Yes, I do. I don't ask a priest to come, but some people do. I think it is important to respect our ancestors always. For example, in foreign countries, they have many pictures of ancestors. I think it is a good way to remember and think about them. [Latter-day Saints are similar in that] we research our family genealogy.
>
> Q: So even though you are not Buddhist, you would still light incense and worship dead people?
>
> Yes, I do. I go to funerals and light incense for them.
>
> Q: So if others see you, they don't realize you are Christian.
>
> No, they don't notice that. But I pray for them when I go to the funerals, so some people wonder what I am doing.

The *o-bon* festival. (Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.)

> Q: Do you bring prayer beads when you go to funerals?
> No, I didn't bring them to a funeral before I became a Christian, so I won't bring them now.

Abe-*san* efficiently tied his respect for Japanese traditions to a concern for ancestors that is manifested in the LDS Church through genealogical research.

One young Latter-day Saint woman (age twenty) we interviewed had this to say when asked about attending Japanese festivals.

> Q: [Do you go to] the first sunrise of the New Year (*hatsumōde*)?
> I haven't gone. I have gone to a Shrine festival. I've even purchased an *Omikuji* [a slip of paper with a fortune on it]. I don't believe in it, but did it for fun. We celebrate the New Year as you do. But, one time one of my friends asked why I celebrate the New Year even though we believe in another religion. I said I wanted to eat traditional food [laughs]. I think the New Year is not a religious festival; rather it is a Japanese custom.

The *hatsumōde* festival. (Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.)

Q: Haven't your friends invited you to go visit the Shrine on the New Year?

Sometimes. But I usually worked during my high school years, so I didn't have any time. I also visited my grandmother's place for the New Year. I usually spend time with my family.

Q: Then, you didn't need to give religious reasons for not going with your friends because you were working.

Right. Besides, since they know I am Christian, they don't invite me anyway. Some friends say that I don't need to pray at the Shrine, so why don't I go? But I didn't go because I had something to do.

Q: Then, would you go if you had time?

Probably. But it is not that I will go because I believe, but that I just want to spend time with my friends for fun. Also, it is always crowded.

Q: Have you attended [a] wedding or funeral, which might have involved religious beliefs?

I attended a funeral before. I think it is a matter of believing or not, so if I loyally believe my religion and light incense at the funeral, it is okay.

It was also interesting to learn how they viewed LDS rituals, especially among those who had joined the Church in adulthood (most had little or no background in Christianity). For the most part, there appeared to be little difference regarding how rituals such as baptism and taking the sacramental bread and water were viewed by Japanese members. As an example, consider how this member responded when asked about her baptism:

When we are baptized, we sink our whole body and come out from the water. It is performance. It is a symbol that we are reborn after we die. It also testifies about faith and repentance.

She not only recognized the need for faith and the symbolic rebirth that accompanies baptism, but also that it is performance ritual. Others reported "feeling the spirit" or a sense of purity that followed their immersion. Their rather "typical LDS" responses to these types of rituals may be because there are no direct analogues to these rituals in traditional Japanese faith traditions, such as Shintoism or Buddhism. Thus it was a part of the socialization process that comes with joining a new group.

 The most dramatic and profound responses occurred when considering the temple. Several members, for instance, found the experience of the temple unusual, especially substitutionary work for the dead. It initially seemed unlike anything they had ever experienced. Japanese beliefs about existence after death are multifaceted, including Shinto teachings that one's spirit or soul (*tama*) may act as a guide to one's family after death and Buddhist beliefs that certain rituals serve to shepherd the spirit toward enlightened status.[63] Thus the belief in doing work for the dead so they may gain salvation and exaltation in a particular kingdom was novel, as was the concept of an eternal marriage and family. Yet, as one missionary we interviewed put it, "They came to enjoy it, and loved visiting the temple when they had the opportunity. But the first time was kind

of awkward, which is understandable for somebody who [previously] had nothing to do with Christianity. Then they're baptized and now all of the sudden they're like, wow, this is a real religion, you know. I'm really in up to my neck in this religion."

Tsuda Chieko said she tried to go to the LDS temple in Tokyo at least once a year. Although she initially found the rituals rather strange, especially the temple apparel, substitutionary baptism, and the Creation narratives, Tsuda came to see her time in the temple as well spent because it made her feel valuable to deceased ancestors. One of the interesting parallels that emerged from an understanding of LDS beliefs is that baptizing ancestors into the Church was especially valued by some Japanese members because ancestor veneration has such deep roots in their nation. Similar to the belief surrounding traditional Japanese rituals that human acts can be efficacious for deceased relatives by helping them enter a better and more peaceful existence, several Japanese LDS members came to recognize that their temple activities could also provide a similar, yet even more intricate, eternal pathway for deceased relatives and non-relatives alike. Thus it was intriguing that what at first seemed strange and unfamiliar emerged as especially valuable in a culture that cherishes the memory and spirit of ancestors.

Conclusions

Although the social scientific study of ritual is more than a hundred years old, it remains an area ripe for observation and analysis. For instance, there have been few studies of how contemporary religious rituals serve to reproduce class, gender, ethnicity, tastes, choices, attitudes, or other issues of interest to the sociological and anthropological communities. Moreover, a promising trend that was mentioned earlier involves the idea that the views of religious group members—how they perceive their participation in their faiths' ritual actions—should be taken seriously by outside observers.[64] Although these observers do not need to necessarily accept the validity of the members' beliefs, without understanding how beliefs interact with actions, much of the richness and communicative power of religion is missed.[65] Rituals do not simply serve a temporal function of bringing

about social cohesion or social control; rather, they provide this and much more. For example, LDS rituals serve useful functions because they are couched in a particular narrative that cements identity and community. Yet for members of the LDS community as well as religious practitioners of many faiths, participation in ritual also brings them closer to the sacred, supernal truths that provide such certitude to their lives. Beliefs are not only animated by ritual; they also clearly guide ritual.

A promising way of viewing rituals and their place in structuring religious identities and beliefs is to think of them as shifting groups from a simple series to a recognizable social group, or what social scientists refer to as *seriality*. The notion of seriality is due to the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre.[66] According to his view, a series is a social collective whose members are joined merely by a common, temporal object around which their actions are oriented. As an example, Sartre discussed a group of people waiting for a bus. A social group, on the other hand, is a collection of persons who recognize that they are unified by a common project and goal, such as, in an extreme but not unusual example, to transform the world to a place where God may dwell. Religious rituals may be seen as playing an important role in transforming collectives from a series to a social group. In particular, the social group in which many religious people find themselves may come to be uniquely real in their eyes. Their most essential identities as God's children, as Latter-day Saints, or as a unique religious body, are aroused by ritual participation. In the eyes of believers, ritual is communication with and service to God. For many groups, religious ritual takes them quite far through a process of seriality.

A second useful way to view rituals is to study their role in *boundary work*. The notion of boundary work in the social sciences involves a conceptual or symbolic demarcation of social space, such as a tendency to see some people as members of one's group and others as outside one's group. This is certainly not a novel idea, but it has become more relevant in modern society because, as some observers have argued, traditional religious boundaries have become porous or no longer provide people with unique identities. In fact, some scholars see this diminution of boundaries as going hand-in-hand with the loss of ritual in modern society.[67] Others,

however, see boundaries as transforming mainly along nationalistic and ethnic lines more now than in the past. This may simply be a by-product of the loss of boundaries in other social spheres, such as class distinctions that are no longer seen as quite as relevant as in the past, especially in modern nations. As discussed by several social scientists, however, there are now many categorical communities that do not require regular personal interaction because they are structured by a common vocabulary and shared symbols that create a joint identity for their members.[68] Although they may be dispersed throughout the globe, there are symbols that are shared widely through local meetings, media, and other common experiences (e.g., general conference). Given our age when communication is no longer only a local phenomenon, religious rituals, even though they may have decreased over the last several decades, continue to encourage boundary work as they mark off a symbolic space which helps define the group and its identity. The examples from the LDS Church discussed earlier—in particular, temple work—certainly provide a clear view of how boundary work is accomplished in one religious faith. The global spread of this faith has been accompanied by maintenance of its beliefs, traditions, and ritual actions. This is a wonderful example of the upholding of boundaries in a categorical community.

Notes

1. For example, see Randall Collins, *Interaction Chain Rituals* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2005).
2. I will focus generally on sociological studies of ritual and use this research to generate observations about ritual in contemporary society. However, even a brief review of the literature on ritual shows that anthropologists have easily contributed the most content to social scientific research on religious rituals. Thus my review also draws liberally from anthropological contributions to the study of ritual, especially those studies that approach or fall within the general parameters of the sociological method. See John P. Hoffmann, ed., *Understanding Religious Ritual: Theoretical Approaches and Innovations* (New York: Routledge, 2011), for an overview of social scientific research on and theories that have been applied to religious rituals.
3. See Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (1912; repr., New York: Free Press, 1995).

4. See Victor W. Turner, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society: A Study of Ndembu Village Life* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1957).

5. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 421.

6. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 34.

7. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 38.

8. See Collins, *Interaction Chain Ritual.*

9. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 20.

10. See Timothy J. Nelson, *Every Time I Feel the Spirit: Religious Experience and Ritual in an African American Church* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Andrew L. Roth, "'Men Wearing Masks': Issues of Description in the Analysis of Ritual," *Sociological Theory* 13, no. 3 (1995): 301–27.

11. See Nelson, *Every Time.*

12. See Maurice Bloch, "The Past and Present in the Present," *Man* 12 (1977): 278–92.

13. See Douglas A. Marshall, "Behavior, Belonging, and Belief: A Theory of Ritual Practice," *Sociological Theory* 20, no. 3 (2002): 360–80; Michael S. Merrill, "Masks, Metaphors, and Transformation: The Communication of Belief in Ritual Performance," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 18 no. 1 (2004): 16–33.

14. See Rodney Stark, *One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Rodney Stark, "God, Rituals, and the Moral Order," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, no. 4 (2001): 619–36; Rodney Stark, "Economics of Religion," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. Robert A. Segal (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 47–67.

15. See David N. Gellner, "Religion, Politics, and Ritual: Remarks on Geertz and Bloch," *Social Anthropology* 7, no. 2 (1999): 135–53.

16. See Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

17. See Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

18. See Turner, *Ritual Process.*

19. Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95.

20. Victor W. Turner, "Symbols in African Ritual," *Science* 179 (1973): 1100–1105.

21. For example, see Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

22. For a cogent presentation of Turner's approach to ritual, see Victor W. Turner, "Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 6, no. 4 (1979): 465–99. For a thorough review and critique of Turner's ideas about ritual and religion, see Mathieu Deflem, "Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of

Victor Turner's Processual Symbolic Interaction," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30 (1991): 1–25.

23. Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24.

24. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion*, 27; emphasis in original.

25. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion*, 50, 58.

26. Some observers place Rappaport clearly in the Durkheimian tradition by arguing that he saw rituals as providing a key source of social control over the behaviors of community members. However, making a nuanced observation, Rappaport wrote, "The primary function or metafunction of liturgical performances [rituals] is not to control behavior directly, but rather to establish conventional understandings, rules and norms in accordance with which everyday behavior is supposed to proceed. Participation in a ritual in which a prohibition against adultery is enunciated by, among others, himself may not prevent a man from committing adultery, but it does establish for him the prohibition of adultery as a rule that he himself has both enlivened and accepted. *Whether or not he abides by that rule, he has obligated himself to do so*" (emphasis in original). In other words, rituals provide the recipe for action, but the actor is responsible—one might say has agency—for the morality or immorality of his behavior. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion*, 123.

27. Several other anthropologists discuss the performative nature of ritual. For example, Stanley J. Tambiah assesses ritual as performance, but focuses mainly on how it transcends time and space due to its changelessness. "A Performative Approach to Ritual," *Proceedings of the British Academy of Sciences* 65 (1979): 113–69. In sociology, Jeffrey C. Alexander has recently developed a model of ritual as cultural performance. See "Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy," *Sociological Theory* 22 (2004): 527–73.

28. See René Girard, *La violence et le Sacré* (*Violence and the Sacred*) (Paris: Grasset, 1972); Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952).

29. For example, Sally K. Gallagher, "Building Traditions: Comparing Space, Ritual, and Community in Three Congregations," *Review of Religious Research* 47, no. 1 (2005): 70–85.

30. See Mark J. Cartledge, "The Future of Glossolalia: Fundamentalist or Experientialist?," *Religion* 28 (1998): 233–44; Elaine J. Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

31. See Collins, *Interaction Chain Ritual*; Brian Malley and Justin Barrett, "Can Ritual Form Be Predicted from Religious Belief? A Test of the Lawson-McCauley Hypotheses," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17, no. 2 (2003): 1–14;

Robert N. McCauley and E. Thomas Lawson, *Bringing Ritual to Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

32. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 220.

33. See Collins, *Interaction Chain Rituals.*

34. Collins, *Interaction Chain Rituals*, 49.

35. Collins, *Interaction Chain Rituals*, 49.

36. See Candace S. Alcorta and Richard Sosis, "Ritual, Emotion, and Sacred Symbols: The Evolution of Religion as an Adaptive Complex," *Human Nature* 16 (2005): 323–59.

37. See Collins, "Thirteen Ways."

38. See Robert Wuthnow, *Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

39. See John P. Hoffmann, *Japanese Saints: Mormons in the Land of the Rising Sun* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007). See also Margaret A. Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach," *Theory and Society* 23 (1993): 605–49 on *public narratives* and Nancy T. Ammerman, "Religious Identities and Religious Institutions," in *Handbook for the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Michele Dillon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 207–24, on *autobiographical narratives.*

40. See Nelson, *Every Time.* A useful way to examine narratives is by drawing from Andrew Greeley's notion of religion as poetry. Andrew Greeley, *Religion as Poetry* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1996). Briefly, he claimed that religious stories evoke powerful emotions and thoughts. Compare Alcorta and Sosis, "Ritual, Emotion, and Sacred Symbols"; Collins, *Interaction Chain Rituals.* Greeley proposed that religion for individuals and various faith communities involves "experiences that renew hope, is encoded in the preconscious (creative intuition, poetic dimension, agent intellect—call it what one will), in symbols, shared with others in stories, which are told to and constitute a story-telling community, which enacts the stories in community rituals." *Religion as Poetry*, 23. Although Greeley's discussion of this perspective is rich with observation and analysis, for our purposes the key components involve the symbols that are shared in stories and enacted in group rituals. The interactional narratives that involve such stories are based in a common idiom that allows shared symbolic referents and empathy.

41. See Nelson, *Every Time.*

42. Nelson, *Every Time*, 61.

43. Nelson, *Every Time*, 62.

44. See Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation: Force, Grace and Glory* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2000); Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). As well known to most readers of this chapter, the temple rituals are highly sacred to members of the LDS Church. In fact, in the LDS community, there is no

more sacred place on the earth than a dedicated temple. Given this sacred status, the actual narratives and particular actions that take place are strictly confidential and are not revealed to those who have not been granted permission to enter the temple. Nevertheless, several of the activities (but not the narratives) that take place in this sacred space are described in general terms to interested observers during tours of temples prior to their dedication.

45. See Kathleen Flake, "'Not to Be Riten': The Mormon Temple Rite as Oral Canon," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 9 (1998): 1–21.

46. In a statement that is consistent with Davies's position—as well as Thomas F. O'Dea's ideas from fifty years ago—on the strong identity effects of LDS temples, Flake stated, "The LDS temple solidifies . . . the LDS faith community. It defines the community's internal cohesiveness and the external boundaries in terms of cosmically defined, historically-impervious canon assumed by covenant. No longer able or desiring to isolate themselves in the Rocky Mountain West or to particularize themselves by separate commercial or marital economies, the Saints can be expected to increasingly rely upon the temple for their sense of separateness which is also their sense of cosmic wholeness and solidarity as a community." Flake, "'Not to Be Riten,'" 9; see also Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

47. Compare Nelson, *Every Time.*

48. See Davies, *Mormon Culture.*

49. See Davies, *Mormon Culture*, 129–30.

50. See Wuthnow, *Meaning and Moral Order.*

51. See Keith Parry, "The Mormon Missionary Companionship," in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 182–206.

52. See Richard J. McClendon and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Latter-day Saint Returned Missionaries in the United States: A Survey of Religious Activity and Postmission Adjustment," *BYU Studies* 43, no. 2 (2004): 131–57.

53. See Loren D. Marks and David C. Dollahite, "'Don't Forget Home': The Importance of Sacred Rituals in Families," in *Understanding Religious Ritual: Theoretical Approaches and Innovations*, ed. John P. Hoffmann (New York: Routledge, 2011), 186–201.

54. See Hoffmann, *Japanese Saints.*

55. See John P. Hoffmann and Charlie V. Morgan, "Japanese Members of the LDS Church: A Qualitative View," in *Taking the Gospel to the Japanese, 1901–2001*, ed. Reid L. Neilson and Van C. Gessel (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 403–22.

56. See Ian Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991).

57. See John W. Traphagan, "Reproducing Elder Male Power through Ritual Performance in Japan," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 15 (2000): 81–97.

58. See Satsuki Kawano, *Ritual Practice in Modern Japan: Ordering Place, People, and Action* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005).

59. See Brian McVeigh, "The Authorization of Ritual and the Ritualization of Authority: The Practice of Values in a Japanese New Religion," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 6 (1992): 39–58.

60. See McVeigh, "The Authorization of Ritual."

61. See Kawano, *Ritual Practice in Modern Japan*.

62. Kawano, *Ritual Practice in Modern Japan.* Kawano noted that some studies by Westerners elicit a typical response that Japanese rituals are mere "tradition" handed down from ancestors, whereas she was able to conceptually unpack the ritual actions that she observed because of her "insider" status. In order to avoid some of the problems that Western researchers have experienced when studying Japanese rituals, most of the interviews were conducted by native Japanese people who were hired specifically to work on my study.

63. Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 40.

64. See Gallagher, "Building Traditions"; Nelson, *Every Time.*

65. See Greeley, *Religion as Poetry*; Stark, *One True God*; Stark, "God, Rituals, and the Moral Order."

66. See Jean-Peal Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reasoning*, vol. 1, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (1960; repr., New York: Verso, 2004).

67. See Alexander, "Cultural Pragmatics."

68. See Michèle Lamont and Virág Molnár, "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences," *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 167–95.