

MORMON

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"For four years I applied myself to the business of Salt Lake City as a member of the City Commission," he recalled. "It was one of the biggest corporations in the state of Utah. I was invited to become a director of the Union Pacific, the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the U.S., to serve on the board of governors of the American Red Cross.

"As a director of these various institutions, if you apply yourself, you certainly must pick up some business experience."

During this period he largely organized, became the virtual father of, the church's far-famed welfare system. This was in the Depression-ridden 1930s.

Welfare System

"It took a lot of management, application of business principles, to see that this was done. The spiritual must never forget that there is a temporal side of life."

If the church is famed among non-Mormons for any specific virtue, it is the womb-to-tomb care it takes of its members, a solicitude in which its extensive welfare system is a vital cog.

The church stresses that its people should look out for one another. When disaster strikes one Mormon family, others close in with support in every way possible, and this is part of the formal teaching of the faith.

Doubles Membership

Its welfare program, President Lee said, is one key to the surprising growth by which the church has doubled its membership within 12 years and now stands at about 3.1 million, sixth largest among 217 American church organizations. It scored this swift growth when other faiths are stagnating or even losing membership.

"The biggest problem we have is that of tremendous growth," said President Lee.

"We're all over the world, now. We're no longer just a Western church, or a Utah church, or an American church. We're teaching the Gospel in 17 languages. We are gearing ourselves up to meet the challenge of growth."

The most controversial issue concerning Mormonism, at least among non-Mormons, and possibly even among the faithful themselves, is the attitude of the church toward Negroes. It has about 5,000 black members, according to reports, including three who sing in the highly respected Tabernacle Choir.

Priesthood Denied

The church, while admitting them as members, denies them the "priesthood," which means that they can never rise above a particular level of the church or enjoy certain presumed after-life benefits, at least until the policy is changed. The practice stems from one of the writings of Prophet Joseph Smith.

Asked if there was any possibility of a change in the official position, President Lee replied:

"The only one who could answer that would be the Lord Himself.

"I was asked by a Harvard student, 'How would you explain to a nonmember the position of the church on this question?' I said, 'To one who doesn't believe in revelation, there's no satisfactory answer; to those who do believe in revelation, there should be no question.'

Promise to Blacks

"We're standing by. We say this: We have thousands of those who are blacks, and some of them are the most faithful people we have. The promise has been made that if they are true and faithful, that while they may not presently attain to the highest privileges, they will get more by a baptism into the true church than they would otherwise.

"So we encourage them to be true and faithful. We open the door as wide as we can to church activities. Negro girls sing in the choir. We have fine black boys as athletic di-

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