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ADAM SAMUEL BENNION  
SUPERINTENDENT OF L.D.S. EDUCATION--1919 TO 1928

L-2

A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Department of Graduate Studies in  
The College of Religious Instruction  
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Religious Education

by  
Kenneth G. Bell

August 1969

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A decade has elapsed since the passing of Elder Adam S. Bennion, who at the time of death was serving his Church in one of the highest offices bestowed upon any of its members; that of Apostle of the Lord, Jesus Christ. That assignment was the culmination of a lifetime of dedicated service to his fellowmen through many Church and civic assignments. No doubt, many remember his eloquence as a public speaker, the gifted ability which he possessed to reach into the very hearts and minds of men and inspire them to the nobler life.

Fewer however, would remember his contribution in an earlier Church call (some thirty-four years earlier), when he served as Superintendent of Education for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It was in that earlier call that he helped forge new educational policy for the Church, much of which is still in operation today. To him may appropriately be given the title "Father of the Seminary and Institute Program of the Church," for it was through his work, vision and philosophy that this program moved out of the experimental phase into a Church-wide program.

#### Review of Related Literature

In 1935 M. Lynn Bennion completed his dissertation, which centers mainly on the history of education in Utah, with special emphasis on an explanation of each phase of the educational program of the Church as it



developed.<sup>1</sup>

A. Theodore Tuttle's work, in 1949, centers in the area of released-time, its legal status, and a history of its development in the educational system of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>2</sup>

Ray L. DeBoer, a non-Mormon, discusses the effect of Mormon education in shaping a philosophy of education for the public school system in Utah.<sup>3</sup>

James R. Clark, in his work in 1958, outlined the history of the interaction between the churches of Utah and the state as regards education. His work emphasized the formulation of educational philosophies and policies of both groups.<sup>4</sup>

Rodney Turner's study involves the selection of teachers for the seminary program, the policies of the Church governing that selection,

<sup>1</sup>M. Lynn Bennion, "The Origin, Growth and Extension of the Educational Program of the Mormon Church in Utah" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1935).

<sup>2</sup>A. Theodore Tuttle, "The Released Time Education Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (published Master's thesis, Stanford University, Palo Alto, 1949).

<sup>3</sup>Ray L. DeBoer, "A Historical Study of Mormon Education And The Influence of Its Philosophy On Public Education In Utah" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1951).

<sup>4</sup>James R. Clark, "Church and State Relationships in Education in Utah" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Utah State University, Logan, 1958).



and the procedures and criteria used for screening applicants.<sup>5</sup>

John A. Braithwaite's work, biographical in nature, attempts a broad coverage of the life of Adam S. Bennion. Much of it revolves around Bennion's achievements in business, civic assignments and Church work. Although accurate in pinpointing dates and places, very little is said of Bennion's educational philosophy or of the great contribution which he made in the field of religious education.<sup>6</sup>

#### Purpose Of The Study

The purpose of this study is three-fold:

First of all, to examine the development of the Seminary and Institute Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints under the able leadership of Adam S. Bennion.

Secondly, to present objectively his philosophy of religious education as it relates to teachers, students, subject material and methods, as well as to the theological aims and objectives of the Church. In so doing, much of his philosophical contribution, compiled from speeches and writings both published and unpublished, will be brought together for a systematic examination by teacher and student alike. The ultimate benefits accruing from the study of his philosophy can only be

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<sup>5</sup>Rodney Turner, "A Study of Teacher Selection In The Seminary System of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1960).

<sup>6</sup>John Andrew Braithwaite, "Adam Samuel Bennion, Educator, Businessman and Apostle" (unpublished Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, 1965).

guessed at, but it is hoped that educators, and especially religious educators, may well profit by the experience and wisdom of so capable an educational leader.

Thirdly, to evaluate his educational contribution in light of present philosophy in the L.D.S. Department of Education. This will be necessary to determine, if possible, the extent and far-reaching effect his philosophy has had on the widely expanded present-day system.

### Delimitations

Obviously this is not an exhaustive study of Adam S. Bennion, the man, since it touches only one important segment of his life. He was a very industrious man, and hence made great contributions in many endeavors in life, including business, civic and religious. Since other studies have already been done, evaluating his contributions in those areas, this study focuses primarily on his educational achievements.

### Sources

The major part of the data has been collected from the following sources:

His publications; both books and articles.

His unpublished speeches; taken from his personal speech collection, located in the Archives of the Brigham Young University Library.

His correspondence.

Other personal manuscripts; located in the Archives of the Brigham Young University Library.

Minutes of the L.D.S. Church General Board of Education; located

in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Selected unpublished theses and dissertations.

Personal interviews with selected individuals whose lives he touched.

Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;  
located in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City, Utah.



## CHAPTER II

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF L.D.S. EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY PRIOR TO 1919

#### The Beginning

It should be said at the outset that Adam Samuel Bennion was a devout Mormon.<sup>1</sup> This being true, it becomes almost impossible to separate his philosophical attitudes concerning education from those attitudes held in common by all practicing Mormons. It becomes necessary therefore, in order to appreciate the more his full contribution, to examine the source of Mormon educational philosophy, and to trace briefly the history of Mormon education prior to his administration, which commenced in 1919.

✓ Scarcely had the Church begun, when its founder, Joseph Smith Jr., began receiving revelations relative to the education of its members. A number of these revelations have since been published in a volume known as the Doctrine and Covenants, which is accepted by the Mormons as scripture and the Word of the Lord to his people in these times. When the Church was barely a year old, June of 1831, Smith received a revelation containing the Lord's assignment for a certain William W. Phelps, a new convert to the Church. The revelation reads, in part: "And again, you shall be ordained to assist my servant Oliver Cowdery to do the work of

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<sup>1</sup>"Mormon" is another name for a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It stems from the Book of Mormon, a book held as scripture by the Latter-day Saints.

printing, and selecting and writing books for schools in this Church, that little children also may receive instruction before me as is pleasing unto me."<sup>2</sup>

As additional revelations were to attest, little children were not the only ones for whom education would be required. In fact, as the educational philosophy of the Church began to unfold, dictated by Smith, it soon became apparent that education was to be required of all members of the Church. Such profound statements as "the glory of God is intelligence,"<sup>3</sup> and "it is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance"<sup>4</sup> placed education out of the realm of mere telestial practicality. It now became a basic tenet of the faith to Mormons. If a man would achieve his highest possibility he must be educated. And further, in a revelation given in 1843, the Mormons were told that "whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come."<sup>5</sup> This passage clearly indicates that in Mormon theology this mortal life is not the end of all learning, but that life and learning are eternal.

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<sup>2</sup>The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1952), 55:4, hereafter cited as D&C.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 93:36.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 131:6.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 130:18-19.



When education was placed on this basis, it may seem logical to assume that spiritual or religious or theological education would be given greater emphasis than secular education. However, on December 27, 1832 Smith received another revelation, wherein he and the members of the Church were given the commandment to

. . . teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;

Of things both in heaven and in earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgements which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms<sup>6</sup> . . .

As the above indicates, there were few subject areas not to be explored by the inquiring Latter-day Saint. It is important to note that this marriage of religious and secular education in Mormon educational philosophy is still in force today, and was very much in evidence during Adam S. Bennion's life and administration as Superintendent of Church Education. B. H. Roberts, a prominent Mormon leader, writing just prior to Bennion's administration expressed the Mormon point of view this way:

In other words, it is of first importance, from the Mormon point of view in education, that the student be taught the truth about himself, his own origin, nature, and destiny; his relationship to the past, to the present, to the future; his relationship to Deity, to his fellowmen and to the universe. And then from this vantage

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 88:77-79.



ground of ascertained relationships he is in a position to go forth conquering and to conquer until all things are subdued under his feet . . .

I pray you think for a moment what effect these doctrines must have upon a people's views of education . . . Unquestionably the broadest view possible. It will lift all thoughts of education far above the mere utilitarian notion of education . . .

The Mormon point of view in education will regard man's past and man's future, and will arrange its curriculum of instruction with reference to both past and future. And it will and does emphasize the spiritual--which also includes the moral--education of man. Hence it is that the Church provides academies and colleges where theology, that is to say, the science which teaches the relationship of Deity and man, and the science of right-living, is made a prominent feature in the course of studies.

And yet I would not have my readers think that the Mormon point of view in education emphasizes the spiritual education of man to the neglect of his intellectual and physical education. Nor do Mormons regard intellectual and physical education in less esteem than other people do. It is not a case of esteeming intellectual and physical education less, but of esteeming spiritual education more.

This as I view it, is the Mormon point of view in education--it has regard not only to the preparation of man for the duties and responsibilities of the moment of time he lives in this world, but aims to prepare him for eternal life in the mansions and companionship of the Gods.<sup>7</sup>

Attempting to carry out the injunction that all types of learning be incorporated into the curriculum of the Latter-day Saints, while at Kirtland, Ohio in the early part of 1833, Joseph Smith organized what came to be known as the "School of the Prophets." This school "served to train both the lay missionaries and the lay leadership in the Church. Its

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<sup>7</sup> Brigham H. Roberts, "The Mormon Point of View in Education," The Improvement Era, Vol. II (November 1898), pp. 120-26.



offerings were similar to those of most academies of the day."<sup>8</sup> A half year earlier than this Smith had instructed the members to prepare schools for their children.<sup>9</sup>

During the same period that these schools were being established in Kirtland, many of the Latter-day Saints had moved into Missouri, which at this time was the American frontier. Even here the members of the Church established schools without delay. Richard R. Lyman, quoting the History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties in Missouri, states:

The Mormons very early gave attention to educational matters. There were many teachers among them, and school houses were among their first buildings. The school house in Far West (1836-39) was used as a Church, as a Town Hall, and as a Court House, as well as for a school house.<sup>10</sup>

And at a cornerstone ceremony for the temple at Far West in 1838, Sidney Rigdon, a counselor to Joseph Smith in the First Presidency of the Church declared:

Next to the worship of our God, we esteem the education of our children and of the rising generation. What is wealth without society or society without intelligence. And how is intelligence obtained?--by education . . . What is religion without intelligence?

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✓<sup>8</sup>Wendell O. Rich, "Certain Basic Concepts in the Education Philosophy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1930" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Utah State Agricultural College, Logan, 1952), p. 16.

✓<sup>9</sup>Joseph Smith, History of The Church, of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts (second edition revised, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959-60), p. 276, commonly known as and hereafter cited as DHC.

✓<sup>10</sup>Richard R. Lyman, "Ideals and Early Achievements of the Church in Education," The Improvement Era, Vol. XXXIII (April 1930), p. 395.

An empty soul. Intelligence is the root from which all time enjoyments flow. Intelligence is religion and religion intelligence, if it is anything.<sup>11</sup>

During the winter of 1838-39, due to persecution and mob violence, the Mormons were forced to leave Missouri, and sought refuge on the East side of the Mississippi River in Illinois. There they purchased a little tract of land known as the village of Commerce and promptly renamed it "Nauvoo". There they built a beautiful city, and were able to obtain a charter from the State of Illinois. This charter was very liberal, affording them, among many other things, the right to build a university. Article 24 of that charter reads, in part, as follows:

The City Council may establish and organize an institution of learning within the limits of the city, for the teaching of the Arts, Sciences, and Learned Professions, to be called the University of the City of Nauvoo, which institution shall be under the control and management of a Board of Trustees, consisting of a Chancellor, Registrar, and twenty-three Regents . . . and shall have all the powers and privileges for the Advancement of the cause of education which appertain to the Trustees of any other College or University of this State.<sup>12</sup>

This piece of legislation is interesting in that it suggests a broad secular curriculum. That such was the intention of the Church leaders is evidenced by the following statement from Joseph Smith.

The "University of the City of Nauvoo" will enable us to teach our children wisdom, to instruct them in all the knowledge and learning, in the arts, sciences, and learned professions. We hope to make this institution one of the great lights of the world, and by and through it to diffuse that kind of knowledge which will be of practicable utility, and for the public good, and also for private

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<sup>11</sup>Rich, op. cit., p. 176.

<sup>12</sup>DHC, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 243-4.



and individual happiness. The Regents of the University will take the general supervision of all matters appertaining to education, from common schools up to the highest branches of a most liberal collegiate course. They will establish a regular system of education, and hand over the pupil from teacher to professor, until the regular graduation is consummated and the education finished.<sup>13</sup>

But such well intended plans were not to be. Before they could materialize, persecution and hate, in the form of mob violence, once again arose. Joseph Smith was murdered, and the leadership of the Church fell to Brigham Young. Under his direction the Church moved west, seeking a peaceful home in the Rocky Mountains. The journey was made under extreme hardship and sacrifice, but it is interesting to note that even so, education was not neglected.

Semi-permanent way-settlements were organized along the route at such places as Garden Grove, Winter Quarter, and Mt. Pisgah. Here and enroute, specific instructions were given by Brigham Young to provide for the schooling of children. In his elaborate diary, Hosea Stout reports that on December 13, 1846, President Young gave some explicit instructions to the bishops and demanded that they be complied with at once. Among the edicts was one directing them to provide schools in each of the wards. The bishops acceded to Brigham young's orders and the Church chronology enumerating the events of that time states: "several schools for the children have been started in camp within the last ten days."<sup>14</sup>

And when school could not be held in the regular permanent encampments, it was held in the open wagon box.<sup>15</sup>

That Brigham Young took a personal interest in education is further evidenced by the following epistle, which he issued to the Saints while enroute to the Salt Lake Valley. He said:

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<sup>13</sup>DHC, Ibid. pp. 269-70.

<sup>14</sup>Rich, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 21.



It is very desirable that all the Saints should take every opportunity of securing at least a copy of every valuable treatise on education--every book, map, chart, or diagram that may contain interesting, useful, and attractive matter, to gain the attention of children, and cause them to love to learn to read; and also every historical, mathematical, philosophical, geographical, geological, astronomical, scientific, practical, and all other variety of useful and interesting writings, maps, & c., to present to the General Church Recorder, when they shall arrive at their destination, from which important and interesting matter may be gleaned to compile the most valuable works on every science and subject, for the benefit of the rising generation.

We have a printing press, and any who can take good printing or writing paper to the valley will be blessing themselves and the Church. We also want all kinds of mathematical and philosophical instruments, together with all rare specimens of natural curiosities and works of art that can be gathered and brought to the valley, where, and from which, the rising generation can receive instruction.<sup>16</sup>

Brigham Young shared Joseph Smith's philosophy of seeking knowledge on a broad scale. At a later time he said: "The religion embraced by the Latter-day Saints . . . prompts them to search diligently after knowledge. There is no other people in existence more eager to see, hear, learn, and understand truth."<sup>17</sup>

#### Early Mormon Education In Utah

Scarcely had the Saints arrived in the Salt Lake Valley until

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<sup>16</sup>Ray L. DeBoer, "A Historical Study of Mormon Education and The Influence of Its Philosophy On Public Education In Utah" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, The University of Denver, Denver, 1951), p. 37.

<sup>17</sup>Discourses of Brigham Young, Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1925 (selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe), p. 254.



schools were established.

The first of these schools was opened in October, 1847 in the old Fort in Salt Lake City, three months after the arrival of the first immigrants, and was held in an old military tent, resembling an Indian wigwam.<sup>18</sup>

The following year the tent was replaced by a more commodious edifice, herein described by Henry A. Smith.

The pioneers built the first schoolhouse in the present state of Utah. It was a 30 by 50 feet room built as the northwest corner of the Old Fort in which Oliver B. Huntington commenced school in November, 1848. The walls were made of split logs with the roof covered with dirt and the floor of hardened clay.

Schools flourished in the valley during those first years under the care of these Mormon people. This is evidenced from a general epistle of the First Presidency: "There have been a large number of schools the past winter in which Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, German, Tahitian, and English languages have been taught."

By 1849 there were 19 wards organized in Salt Lake City and each of these divisions had its schoolhouse. The pioneers sacrificed much to create these early schools and maintain them.

By 1852 an adobe school house was completed in each of these wards and in many cases the building was used also as a chapel. Up and down the state in those early years when a ward was organized a school was created and the members of the ward were taxed by their bishop for the building of the school house.

Such an achievement was remarkable when one gives consideration to the conditions under which it was made. These people were in the mist of poverty, struggling for a living, 2,000 miles from the frontier of civilization, and yet because of the divine principle of education as taught them by their prophet and pioneer leaders, they willingly made these sacrifices.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Milton Lynn Bennion, "The Origin, Growth and Extension of the Educational Program of The Mormon Church In Utah" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1935), p. 32.

<sup>19</sup>Henry A. Smith, "The Church And Education," The Improvement Era, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4, 1935, p. 222.



After only three years in the Valley, the Saints fulfilled, in part, their dream of a university. In 1850 they established the University of Deseret, which is presently known as the University of Utah.

All during the 1850's "ward schools" or common schools as they were known elsewhere, sprang up all over the Territory. Wherever a settlement was made, the school house was one of the first buildings to be constructed. In many instances the teachers were not professional, but they taught with what ability they had, coupled with a devotion to duty. They considered it a responsibility of their religious devotion to impart to others the knowledge they had acquired. That their educational effort:

. . . was exceptional during Utah's early territorial period is evident from census data for 1850 and 1860 which indicated that Utah had the lowest illiteracy rate on a percentage basis of any state or territory in the Union.<sup>20</sup>

Also during these first years in Utah, the Saints "made little attempt to distinguish between religious and secular education. As a matter of fact, they had encouraged the intermingling of the two."<sup>21</sup>

Brigham Young, as leader and spokesman, pretty well established the philosophy of the Church relative to subject material. As we see from the following, he made little effort to distinguish between

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<sup>20</sup>Rodney Turner, "A Study of Teacher Selection In The Seminary System of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, June 1960), p. 53.

<sup>21</sup>Rich, op. cit., p. 34.

religious and secular education. To him, they were one and the same; both linked with the Latter-day Saint concept of man's eternal progression. He said:

We need constant instruction, and our great heavenly Teacher requires of us to be diligent pupils in his school, that we may in time reach His glorified presence. If we will not lay to heart the rules of education, which our Teacher gives us to study, and continue to advance from one branch of learning to another, we can be scholars of the first class and become endowed with the science, power, excellency, brightness and glory of the heavenly hosts; and unless we are educated as they are, we cannot associate with them.<sup>22</sup>

#### The Protestant Mission Schools

This intermingling of religious and secular education served the Mormons well as long as they remained in comparative isolation. However, with the coming of Johnston's Army in 1858, the period of Mormon isolation ended. Many "gentiles" (as they were referred to in Mormon circles) moved into the communities that had once been almost 100 per cent Mormon. These people certainly did not want their children attending schools where Mormon religious doctrine was part of the curriculum. This fact, coupled with the wide-spread belief that Mormons were ignorant and evil, caused some of the more militant Christian Churches to establish "mission schools" to "redeem" the Mormon youth.

. . . Mormonism was generally regarded as the common enemy of all law-abiding, God-fearing Christians. The autocratic power of Brigham Young, the nefarious practice of polygyny, the "Utah War" of'

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<sup>22</sup>Discourses of Brigham Young, op. cit., p. 383.



1857-58, together with a number of other "evils" reported in the East, combined to close the ranks of the other churches against this "insidious foe." The "Mormon problem" had to be solved. A major effort to that end was the establishment of a number of elementary and secondary mission schools by several of the Protestant faiths in a direct and admitted attempt to win the youth away from Mormonism.<sup>23</sup>

During this period, the United States Secretary of State, William H. Seward, is reported to have said:

The church and schools undertaken by the Episcopal Church in Salt Lake City would do more to solve the Mormon problem than the army and Congress of the United States combined.<sup>24</sup>

However, even though their motive was to win the Mormon youth, "no fair student can fail to recognize the contribution the various churches made to the educational progress of Utah. Their teachers were for the most part well trained and devoted to their work."<sup>25</sup> In fact, it was their success which prompted the Mormons to launch their own formal educational program. By 1884 there were seventy-nine such Protestant mission schools operating with a daily attendance of 6,000. Many of these, of course, were Mormon youngsters.<sup>26</sup> According to Bancroft:

Upon the establishment of schools belonging to other religious denominations, or as they were usually termed in Utah, mission schools, educational results were much more satisfactory, and if much was professed, much was actually taught. The St. Marks grammar school, founded in 1867 in connection with the Episcopal Church, the Salt Lake Seminary, established by the Methodists in 1870, and others founded later by various denominations, received so much patronage that it became necessary for the Mormons to bestir themselves in the matter and there was afterward more efficiency in the school system, private institutions being also founded by the Saints, among them the Academy at Provo and the Brigham Young College at Logan.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Turner, op. cit., 53.   <sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>M. Lynn Bennion, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>26</sup>Rich, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>27</sup>M. Lynn Bennion, op. cit., p. 116.



### The Academies

In 1875 Brigham Young purchased a tract of land in the center of Provo, in Utah County, for the purpose of establishing a Church School. The following year he sent Karl G. Maeser, a German-born educator, to Provo as Principal of the new school. This marked the beginning of the Church Academies. Maeser was a teacher of wide experience, having been trained and educated in his native Germany. He was a practicing teacher there, when he met the Mormon missionaries and was converted. Shortly after, he came to the United States and to Utah, where he established his own school for a time. Brigham Young had been so impressed with his ability that he hired him to teach his own children for a time, prior to his new assignment in Provo.

Pupils who came under Maeser's influence knew that his character was as wholesome as was necessary to be an example for their emulation. He was a teacher by birth and by profession. He knew his students well and felt that his labor was a failure unless a transformation for good was effected in the student's life.<sup>28</sup>

Since Maeser played an important role in the formulation of formal Mormon educational institutions, it may be well to examine a bit of his philosophy. As the following quote from his book "School and Fireside" will attest, he placed great emphasis on religion and the formation of character as educational objectives. He said:

The fundamental principles of Latter-day Saint education are plainly marked, viz. a religious foundation, consisting of reverence for, and obedience to the revealed Word of God . . . The immediate

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<sup>28</sup> DeBoer, op. cit., p. 46.

and practical use of school room acquirements, the pursuance of science, literature and art with careful avoidance, as far as possible, of the human adulterations in them; the formation of character for integrity, truthfulness, chastity, love and independence; and finally a close connection between school and fireside, these are the objectives of Mormon education.<sup>29</sup>

Following the establishment of the first academy, in 1875, other communities, seeing the advantages of having a church-sponsored institution, asked for church permission and assistance in developing their own local academies.<sup>30</sup> By the year 1911, twenty-two academies had been founded by the Mormon Church, ranging from Canada on the north, to Mexico on the south. The largest concentration was in Utah, however, where a total of eleven academies were established.<sup>31</sup>

Even though these academies had been built primarily to insure the teaching of religion, it is interesting to note that their curricula did not differ markedly from that of the public high school. Only a small portion of the school day was given over to the teaching of religion. The rest of the curricula consisted of science, business, agriculture, arts, music, literature, and other general high school subjects.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>M. Lynn Bennion, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>32</sup>M. Lynn Bennion, op. cit., p. 145.



TABLE I

## NAME, LOCATION AND DATE OF OPENING OF LATTER-DAY SAINT ACADEMIES

Academy	Location	Date of Opening
Brigham Young University	Provo, Utah	1875
Brigham Young College	Logan, Utah	1877
Latter-day Saint College	Salt Lake City, Utah	1886
Fielding Academy	Paris, Idaho	1887
Ricks Academy	Rexburg, Idaho	1888
Snow Academy	Ephraim, Utah	1888
Oneida Academy	Preston, Idaho	1888
Snowflake, Academy	Snowflake, Arizona	1888
St. Johns Academy	St. Johns, Arizona	1888
Uintah Academy	Vernal, Utah	1888
Cassia Academy	Oakley, Idaho	1889
Weber Academy	Ogden, Utah	1889
Emery Academy	Castle Dale, Utah	1890
Gila Academy	Thatcher, Arizona	1891
Juarez Academy	Colonia Juarez, Mexico	1897
Murdock Academy	Beaver, Utah	1898
Sun Luis Academy	Sanford, Colorado	1905
Summit Academy	Coalville, Utah	1906
Big Horn Academy	Cowley, Wyoming	1909
Millard Academy	Hinckley, Utah	1910
Knight Academy	Raymond, Canada	1910
Dixie Academy	St. George, Utah	1911

Table compiled from files of the Church Commissioner of Education by M. Lynn Bennion, and copied from page 142 of his dissertation.

### The Public Schools

In 1890 the State of Utah passed the Free Public School Law, which made education on the elementary level compulsory.<sup>33</sup> Even though there had been a few public schools prior to this time, this law really marked the beginning of public education in Utah. Up to this time both Mormon and Protestant schools had dominated the educational scene, each striving to provide a religious education for their people. The latter group, as has been mentioned already, were also trying to proselyte Mormons as well. Now, however, all citizens would be taxed for public education, and if they continued parochial education as well, it would amount to double taxation for education. This situation proved too costly for the Protestants, who by 1900 and practically ceased operation.<sup>34</sup>

The Mormons, however, did discontinue church education on the elementary level, but continued to operate the academies for another thirty years, even though the public schools continued to grow and flourish. Turner states that in 1890 only 5 per cent of the students enrolled in secondary education in Utah were attending public schools. In the same year, 28 per cent were attending Mormon academies, and 67 per cent the Protestant "mission schools." However, by 1924, only 2 percent attended "mission schools", 8 per cent Mormon academies, while the public schools claimed an overwhelming 90 per cent.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>35</sup>Turner, op. cit., pp. 64-65.



The fact that the Mormons held on to the academies as long as they did is attributed to the tremendous responsibility they felt to make certain that their children were well anchored in the Mormon faith. The following from George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency, relative to the Law of 1890, reflected the Mormon point-of-view in that period. He said:

It is of the utmost importance that our children should, in the first place be taught faith in God. This cannot be left out of our system of education. Every child in our midst should be taught how to obtain a knowledge of God. This should be made the corner stone and the foundation of all education. Events are so shaping themselves around us that we shall have to pay great attention to the education of our children upon this important point. We have not started our Church schools, therefore, any too soon. They should receive the fostering care and help of every Latter-day Saint who is able to extend any assistance to them. If we desire our children to grow up in the faith of the everlasting gospel and to be qualified to cope with the learning of the world, we must adopt efficient measures for the proper organizations of our own schools. It will be a great temptation to many people to send their children to the free schools that will now be supported by our taxes, but of what value is learning if it be acquired at the expense of faith? We know some among us who, in acquiring learning in eastern colleges, and some even at home, have gained that learning at the expense of their faith. What a dreadful fate is this for a child born of Latter-day Saint parents.

It appears probable that school education will hereafter be easily obtained in this territory. So far, so good; but we must as a people use every means in our power to make this education sound and true. To do this, we shall have to expend means with considerable liberality; but the result will amply repay us. No better investment can be made than in giving a sound and true religious education to our children.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>George Q. Cannon, "Our Educational Facilities," The Juvenile Instructor, Vol. XXV (April 15, 1890), pp. 243-44.



### The Religion Class

Evidence that the leaders of the Church were much concerned about providing a sound religious background for their children is found in the following letter from the First Presidency, addressed to presidents of stakes, bishops, and all to whom it may concern, dated October 29, 1890:

#### The Problem

The all-absorbing motive that led the great majority of the Latter-day Saints to forsake their homes in the various nations to dwell in these mountain valleys was an ardent desire to serve the Lord more perfectly and with better understanding.

In too many instances, in the course of the years, this grand object has been lost sight of in the toil for daily existence, and less noble aims have largely taken the place of the endeavor to learn the ways of the Lord and walk in his paths.

This benumbing influence in our spiritual life is widely felt in our homes, and more particularly affects our children, whose faith in the great latter-day work has not been developed and strengthened by the experience which their elders have had in lands beyond the borders of Zion.

Nor does the training which our youth receive in the District schools increase their feelings of devotion to God and lover (sic) for his cause, for as is well known, all teachings of a religious character are rigorously excluded from the studies permitted in these institutions.

#### The Remedy

To lessen this great evil, and counteract the tendencies that grow out of a Godless education, the Church Schools of the Saints have been established. But while these accomplish great good, the sphere of their usefulness does not cover the entire field. There are many places where Church Schools cannot, at present, be established . . .

We suggest that in every ward where a Church School is not established, that some brother or sister . . . well adapted for a responsible position . . . be called . . . to take charge of a school

wherein the First Principles of the Gospel, Church History and kindred subjects shall be taught. This school to meet for a short time each afternoon after the close of the district school, or for a longer time on Saturday only . . .

Where Shall These Religion Classes Be Held?

Where arrangement can be made it will, as a general thing, be well to secure the district school room for this purpose, so that when they take place in the afternoon, these exercises can commence immediately after the regular sessions and before the children scatter; but where this is done care must be taken to keep the two entirely separate, so that the law may not be infringed upon. Where the regular school room cannot be obtained some building conveniently situated, as near as possible should be secured in its stead; the object being to secure the attendance, so far as possible, of the children of all the Latter-day Saints.<sup>37</sup>

Obviously the action called for in this letter, signed by President Wilford Woodruff and counsellors, was intended to serve the same purpose as the Church School in areas where the latter were not practicable. The day of "The Religion Class" was born, and it marked the beginning of the Church's withdrawal from formal elementary education. These Religion Classes were generally held on only one day per week, usually on Thursday afternoons for one hour, with volunteer instructors. These instructors were often the public school teachers in those instances where they were members of the Church.<sup>38</sup> That these teachers responded willingly to such a task is probably due to the urgency with which President Woodruff addressed the situation, when he said:

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<sup>37</sup>James R. Clark, "Church and State Relationships in Education in Utah" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, 1958), pp. 260-61.

<sup>38</sup>Turner, op. cit., pp. 67-68.



Religious training is practically excluded from the district schools. The perusal of books that we value as divine records is forbidden. Our children, if left to the training they receive in these schools, will grow up entirely ignorant of those principles of salvation for which the Latter-day Saints have made so many sacrifices. To permit this condition of things to exist among us would be criminal.<sup>39</sup>

These Religion Classes continued in successful operation until 1928, when they were replaced by the "Junior Seminaries," which was a daily and more extensive program.<sup>40</sup>

Even though this turn-of-the-century period of Mormon education seems at times to lay greater stress on religious than secular education, it should be pointed out that this was not necessarily so. The Mormons were still much concerned with secular education, but unable to provide both, because of the financial drain on the people, the Church chose not to duplicate the state's efforts in elementary education. Their course was one of supplementing the state's education with the Religion Class.

### The First Seminary

Although the Religion Class served the theological needs of the Mormon students in the elementary grades, the secondary students attending public schools received practically no formal religious training at all. Those who attended the Church-sponsored academies had the advantage of the daily religion course, but their counterparts in the public secondary schools had no such training available.

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<sup>39</sup>Rich, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>40</sup>Turner, op. cit., p. 68.

Among others who recognized a need for such training was Joseph F. Merrill, a professor at the University of Utah. In August of 1911 Professor Merrill was appointed as a counsellor to President Frank Y. Taylor of the Granite Stake.<sup>41</sup> Among his duties in that calling was the support of education among the membership of the Stake. Professor Merrill stated that while conducting home-study class with his own family, he had been greatly impressed with his wife's knowledge of the Bible as she related stories to the children. Upon inquiring as to where she had obtained such important knowledge he was informed that she had been taught the Bible in theology class while attending the Academy. So impressed was he, that he felt that every boy and girl should receive the same kind of training. Since the Religion Class had been functioning successfully at the elementary level for years, it was just a natural conclusion that perhaps it could succeed on the secondary level as well.

Since Professor Merrill was personally concerned with the high school students in his own stake, most of whom attended the Granite High School, it was to that place that his thinking and planning inevitably led.

His plan was far more ambitious than a once-a-week Religion Class. Since the students in the academies received daily instruction as a part of their regular curriculum, he felt that public school students should

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<sup>41</sup>A. Theodore Tuttle, "The Released Time Education Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (published Master's thesis, Stanford University, Palo Alto, 1949), pp. 56-57.



also. But how to accomplish it without violating the separation of Church and State became a major obstacle. On this matter, his thinking centered in what has since become known as "released-time." Perhaps the school would be willing to release the students for one class period to take a class in religion. Before his idea for daily instruction could be realized this problem would have to be solved. There were other problems too, which likewise would have to be solved. Some of them were: obtaining a qualified teacher; developing a course of study; obtaining credit for the course, and having it recognized both in high school and the university; securing the funds to finance the building and pay the salary of the teacher.<sup>42</sup>

He immediately set to work on these problems, taking each one in its turn. To solve the problem of released-time, he met with the Granite School District Board on March 8, 1912, and in that meeting was granted the privilege "as long as it did not conflict with regular high school work."<sup>43</sup> Most of the students at Granite were allowed a study class during the day, and were permitted to use that class for religion if they and their parents so desired.

The obtaining of credit came easily, since it was no more than recognition of the same thing that had been done for years before (and after this date) in both L.D.S. as well as

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>43</sup>Clark, op. cit., p. 293.

non-L.D.S. Church Schools. The University of Utah has accepted and does now accept for entrance credit, courses in Bible History.<sup>44</sup>

On April 23, 1912 the State Board of Education gave official permission for all public high schools to extend credit for Bible classes.<sup>45</sup> However, in only the Bible courses could credit be given. Even though the Mormons definitely wanted to teach doctrinal courses as well, they neither asked for nor expected credit in those courses.

The next problem, that of selecting a course of study, was easily solved, since the same courses offered in the academies, namely Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon and Church History and Doctrine, could be and were with some modifications adapted.

Another problem, the financing of this new venture was somewhat complicated. It was assumed and finally granted, that since the General Church Board of Education paid the salaries of the teachers in the academies, that a similar arrangement could be made for the Granite Theological Seminary. The erection of a building was another matter however, and the greater portion of this enterprise was assumed by the Granite Stake. The building was constructed across the street from the high school, but not before school was under way in the fall of 1912.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Tuttle, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

<sup>45</sup>Clark, op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>46</sup>Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (April 30, 1913), p. 4.



With the hiring of Thomas J. Yates, a young college graduate, to be the teacher, each of the problems had been solved. "The Granite Theological Seminary opened its doors for religious instruction in the fall of 1912."<sup>47</sup>

This event marked the beginning of "Seminary," a program that ultimately would become the "Church Program" of religious instruction on the secondary level. It was destined to write the demise of the Church Schools or Academies. Although this first seminary was conducted on a purely experimental basis as far as the General Church Board was concerned, it did not take long for other stakes to make similar requests. "In 1915 the Box Elder Seminary at Brigham City opened with Abel S. Rich as the principal and teacher. This was the second seminary established by the Church."<sup>48</sup> In the same year the Church Board no longer considered Seminary an experiment, and funds were appropriated for teachers' salaries.<sup>49</sup> Requests for other seminaries were received and considered by the Board.

With the beginning of seminary in 1912 it became apparent to many that the Church would be willing to abandon the field of secular education in favor of a more highly concentrated approach in the area of religion. Through the seminary the Church could provide the necessary

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<sup>47</sup>Tuttle, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

religious training for its youth, and leave the secular education to the tax-supported public schools. The financial savings were tremendous, since seminary could be provided for about one-eighth the cost of the regular academy. Still there were those who favored the Church School system. It was not until the administration of Adam S. Bennion that the Church made firm policies relative to seminaries to replace Church schools.

Horace H. Cummings, Superintendent of Church Schools prior to Bennion (1905-1919), was a strong advocate of the Church schools. On one occasion he said:

I love to think that all the principles of education are both religious and secular. Not one of them could be spared from society or from the Church. Either would suffer irreparable loss if deprived of training in language, mathematics, or science, as it would without truthfulness, charity or virtue. The multiplication table is as essential to salvation as is faith or baptism. As well might we think of an unreformed thief in the kingdom of heaven as an un-instructed ignoramus. The so-called religious cannot say to the so-called secular "we have no need of thee."<sup>50</sup>

At the end of his administration, July 1919, Superintendent Cummings reported that there were in operation twenty-three Church Schools, with an enrollment of well over 7,200 students.<sup>51</sup> At the same time there were twelve released-time seminaries, with requests for additional ones to be added the following year.<sup>52</sup> During the next nine

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<sup>50</sup>Horace H. Cummings, The Improvement Era, Vol. XVI, p. 938.

<sup>51</sup>Salt Lake Telegram, December 25, 1927.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.



years, the administration of Adam S. Bennion, a phenomenal growth took place relative to the released-time seminaries. That period saw a total of fifty-eight new seminaries organized, raising the Church total to seventy.<sup>53</sup> Also during the Bennion Administration twelve of the twenty-three academies were converted to state public schools.<sup>54</sup> More will be said of this in subsequent chapters.

### Summary

The Mormons very early gave emphasis to educational matters. To them education was far more significant than mere mortal practicality. It was part of their religious beliefs that unless a man be educated in the true sense of the term, he could not achieve his highest eternal possibility, that of companionship with God. Education in the truest sense, to Mormons, included both secular and theological or religious instruction. Very early in the history of the Church it was made plain that all types of knowledge were essential in promotion of the Kingdom and the "true" Latter-day Saint would be diligent in his pursuit thereof.

For this reason schools were established to teach both children and adults. Both religious and secular subjects were a part of the curriculum. Since the Saints were a mobile people during the first twenty years, it became necessary to establish new settlements with

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Journal History (December 28, 1927), p. 2.

regularity. Almost always one of the first buildings to be erected in a new settlement was a school, which often doubled as a chapel or meeting-house.

During the early Utah period, for a decade or so the Mormons lived in comparative isolation, and thus employed the same type of educational procedure as had been done previously. This, of course, included the welding of both religious and secular subjects all in one.

However, with the coming of the "gentiles" or non-Mormons to Utah, some of whom came with the express purpose of proselyting Mormon youth through an educational program, the Saints had to make some modifications in their own program of education. One of the first steps they took was to establish parochial type Church schools, with a curriculum of both religious and secular subjects, still holding to the basic philosophy that both types of education were necessary.

However, with the passage of the Free Public School Act by the Territorial Legislature in 1890, the era of the public school came into being. Since all residents of the territory were then required to support public education through taxation, those who sent their children to parochial schools suffered a double financial burden. This condition eventually led the Church to abolish its parochial school system for secular subjects, but not before a system was devised to continue a religious education program for its youth. The latter came about by the establishment of theological seminaries, the first or experimental one being established in 1912 at Granite High School in Salt Lake City.



Even though it was obvious to many that seminary was the logical solution to providing a religious education supplement to the secular education provided by the public schools, still there were many who resisted the abandonment of the Church School System. It was not until the administration of Adam S. Bennion, as Superintendent of L.D.S. Education, that the Church announced such a policy.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF ADAM S. BENNION

From the very beginning of his life, December 2, 1886,<sup>1</sup> education played a vital role in shaping the destiny of Adam Samuel Bennion. Born in Taylorsville, Utah, to pioneer ancestry, education was respected and encouraged in his family. One of the first schools in Taylorsville was held in the home of Bennion's grandfather, Samuel Bennion.<sup>2</sup>

In his own home much of the encouragement to pursue an education came from Bennion's Mother, Mary Ann Sharp Bennion. His father, Joseph Bushnell Bennion, died when Bennion was only two years of age, and thus the responsibility of educating the children naturally fell to his mother.<sup>3</sup> That she accepted and fulfilled her responsibility well is evidenced in large measure by Bennion's achievements in education. In later years he wrote of his mother, "her tender love and devoted sacrifice inspired me to get my degrees."<sup>4</sup>

It was largely through her inspiration then, after his public schooling in the Salt Lake County Schools, he spent the next seven years

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<sup>1</sup>Journal History (October, 1919), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Louise Putcamp, The Taylorsville Story, Taylorsville, Utah, Zion's First National Bank 1960, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Journal History (October, 1919), p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>News item in the Deseret News, Salt Lake City, February 11, 1958.



(from 1901 to 1908), as a student at the University of Utah.<sup>5</sup> Those years were not easy for Bennion. According to his sister he was only fourteen or fifteen years old when he commenced his schooling at the University.

Mother sent me with Ad to carry the money for his fees. She didn't trust such a young boy with so much money. Later, I would drive him to State Street in the family buggy. There he took the bus, he walked two miles each way to the University and back. At night, I would meet him or else he would walk home with all his books and papers.<sup>6</sup>

An early interest in American and English literature was evidenced by his university curriculum, which consisted largely of courses in those subjects.<sup>7</sup> Probably arising from his English interests was his affiliation with the Drama Club, and he appeared as an actor in one of the plays during his senior year.<sup>8</sup> He was also deeply interested in debate, and associated himself as a member of the debating club, serving as one of the officers during his senior year.<sup>9</sup> On one occasion he teamed with another senior, Jay Stockman, to carry the senior colors against the freshmen for the class championship.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Journal History (October, 1919), p. 13.

<sup>6</sup>John A. Braithwaite, "Adam Samuel Bennion, educator, businessman and Apostle" (unpublished Master's thesis, B.Y.U., 1965), p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ralph V. Chamberlain, "University of Utah History" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 1960), p. 315.

<sup>9</sup>University of Utah Chronicle, Vol. XVI, No. 3, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

Probably most significant about his years at the university was the partial formation of a philosophy of scholarship, one which would definitely find a prominent place in his philosophy of education in the years that followed. As an evidence of his zest for scholarship, he completed an unrequired bachelor's thesis during his senior year. He chose to write on Locke's Theory of Knowledge. On the pages of that thesis is recorded the evidence that Bennion possessed unusual ability as a writer, which included the ability to critique and evaluate; two indispensable tools in the field of education. Quoting Locke, he states:

Thus from the consideration of ourselves, and what we infallibly find in our own constitutions, our reason leads us to the knowledge of this certain and evident truth, that there is an eternal, most powerful and most knowing being, which whether any one will please to call God, it matters not. . . .

From what has been said, it is plain to me we have a more certain knowledge of the existence of a God, than of anything our senses have not immediately discovered to us. Nay, I presume I may say, that we more certainly know that there is a God, than that there is anything else without us. When I say we know, I mean there is such a knowledge within our reach which we cannot miss if we will but apply our minds to that, as we do to several other inquiries.<sup>11</sup>

In reply to Locke's statement, he says:

. . . If so, then it is evident that the great majority of mankind never applies itself.

He seems to base his argument for God largely upon the fact that since there are knowing beings on the earth, which have been created, and he takes it for granted that they have been created, the creator must surely have been an intellectual being, existing as such from eternity. Here again his common sense gets the better of his insight, for it does not follow at all that, because men are born with

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<sup>11</sup> Adam S. Bennion, "Locke's Theory of Knowledge" (unpublished Bachelor's thesis, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 1908), p. 21.



certain capabilities, they must have been created. No, they could have existed independently along side of God eternally and, in the light of most recent thought, they most likely did, so that there is no proof of God here. And moreover, knowledge of God leaves no room for faith, so that it would have been better for Locke to have confined his own knowledge within those limits which he hoped at the outset to establish.<sup>12</sup>

And then he concluded his paper, writing that

. . . mind is the only ultimate reality, and knowledge is the manifestation to ourselves of our own capabilities and our relation to the world of souls of which we are an integral part.<sup>13</sup>

Of those university years, he recorded but one small entry in his diary. "I entered the University of Utah in 1901 and graduated in 1908 with honors--made permanent class president of 08."<sup>14</sup>

It should be noted that Adam Bennion was also very much interested in religion, and even with the pressures of obtaining an education did not neglect his church responsibilities.

From 1904 to 1907 he was a member of the superintendency of the Taylorsville Sunday School, and teacher in the YMMIA. From 1907 to 1915 . . . he served in the superintendency of the Granite Stake Sunday Schools.<sup>15</sup>

### LDS High School

Upon graduation from the University of Utah, Mr. Bennion accepted a teaching assignment at the Latter-day Saints High School in Salt Lake

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28.      <sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 32

<sup>14</sup>Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>15</sup>Journal History (October, 1919), p. 13.

City. He was assigned to teach English, and also served as faculty secretary.<sup>16</sup>

While at the LDS school he encountered his first experience with formal teaching, and found to his liking that the students liked him. In the commencement number of the school paper at the end of the year is recorded this solitary but revealing statement: "In the race for most popular faculty member, Adam Bennion won in a walk."<sup>17</sup>

### The Master's Degree

After three successful years of teaching at LDS High School, Adam Bennion left Salt Lake City in the fall of 1911 for New York City, to seek a master's degree at Columbia University. With him was his bride of one week, Minerva Richards Young, whom he married in the Salt Lake Temple.<sup>18</sup>

Literature seemed also to be his logical choice in graduate school, as his curriculum at Columbia was literally filled with courses in that field.<sup>19</sup>

While at Columbia he also distinguished himself as a scholar. Inside of a year he had completed the requirements for his MA. Degree, and had been elected a member of Phi Beta, an honorary scholastic fraternity.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>LDS High School Gold and Blue, Commencement Number, 1911, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>18</sup>Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 12.      <sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 13.



Granite High School

In the fall of 1912 the Bennions returned to Salt Lake City, where Bennion accepted a new teaching assignment at Granite High School. With the same interest, vigor and enthusiasm that had characterized his teaching at the LDS school, he plunged into his new assignments at Granite. His interests were not confined to his English classes, but seemed to expand to all areas of student interest. In October of that year, the school paper carried these notices relative to Mr. Bennion: "The music class is working hard on some new school songs for Granite and with the able assistance of Mr. Bennion, who arranged the words . . . a number of songs will soon be perfected which will be taught to the student body."<sup>21</sup> "Bennion's ready wit is inexhaustible."<sup>22</sup> "For first class comedy, visit Bennion's English literature class."<sup>23</sup>

The above statements evidence the growing affection of his students for him. At the end of the school year, when it was announced that he would be elevated to principal of the school the following year, the student paper expressed the sentiments of the students as follows:

Mr. Adam Bennion has been appointed to the position made vacant by Mr. (James E.) Moss and this appointment is indeed a popular one. Judging from the splendid record Mr. Bennion has made in the one year he has been with us, his former experience with high school students, his thorough education, together with the sincere interest he has

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<sup>21</sup>Granite High School, Granitian, Vol. III, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

manifested in our school, we are sure he will fulfill the hard task of making an able successor to Mr. Moss. Good luck to our new principal.<sup>24</sup>

One other point of interest that should be noted relative to that particular year of 1912, was the instituting of the LDS seminary adjacent to the Granite High School. This was conducted on an experimental basis, but soon proved so successful that in years to come, under Adam Bennion's leadership, it blossomed into a Church-wide program. No doubt, during this first year Bennion watched with interest this project, perhaps unaware of his future great role in the ultimate success of it. More will be said of this later.

As principal of Granite High School, a position he would hold for three years, Adam Bennion immediately set out to unify the students and faculty. In an early student publication of the year 1913, we read:

Especially do we wish to . . . compliment the Board of Education on their choice of . . . Mr. Adam Bennion. The spirit of growth is more keenly felt at Granite this year than ever before and we predict a successful year.<sup>25</sup>

Especially in the area of student activity the Bennion Administration placed great emphasis. From a history of Granite High we read the following:

Under Dr. Adam S. Bennion, who succeeded James E. Moss as principal, the school continued to grow and activities expanded. Tennis was introduced, and other forms of athletics continued to flourish. The school orchestra and the school band were organized. A club program was initiated by the establishment of the Argicultural Club and the Home Economics Club.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Commencement Number, 1913, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 8.



A school seal was designed by a senior student (Laureen Eldredge); and the school song, "Song of the G," composed by a faculty member (Grace Tout), was introduced.<sup>26</sup>

Another of the notable achievements during his administration was the commencement of an honor roll system in 1914, which proved to be very popular and successful.<sup>27</sup>

Anything wholesome that interested students, interested him, and therein lay part of the secret to his popularity and success as an educator; and also therein lay one more vital link in the formation of a religious educational philosophy. Speaking of those years Willard Ashton, athletic coach at the school relates an interesting experience:

Our football team was playing a game in Logan, and Mr. Bennion always supported our teams. But for some reason, the bus left without him on this occasion. Not to be outdone, he caught a train from Salt Lake City to the junction, some five miles from Logan, and walked the rest of the way to support his boys. He was a boys' man in the strictest way.<sup>28</sup>

And Frank McGhie, one of the students at Granite, confirmed that statement, adding that "Mr. Bennion would often be seen after school playing tennis or basketball with the students; always interested in athletics."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Rex A. Olsen, "A Study of the History of Granite High School" (unpublished Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, 1967), p. 24.

<sup>27</sup>Granitian, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Willard Ashton, Salt Lake City, August 8, 1968.

<sup>29</sup>Interview with Frank McGhie, Salt Lake City, August 9, 1968.

But athletics was not his only interest, for he delighted in teaching character development to his students. One sample of some counsel given to the student body concerning New Year's resolutions should suffice:

The mere making of resolutions is rather a poor occupation, but to put into force in one's life a new resolution each new year would lend an enrichment to character really worth while. To decide on New Year's day that hereafter "I shall not" may result only in dismal failure, whereas to resolve to put one's heart into a new endeavor may leave no time for some undesirable habit and will make life more complete and more happy.

Perhaps as we stand tip-toe on our achievements of nineteen-fourteen and peep into the possibilities of nineteen-fifteen the following hints may offer a suggestion to the maker of resolutions:

I shall be happy even when nothing seems to prompt me to be so.

I shall try to fit myself for service to my fellows, to be a lifter not a leaner.

I shall avoid those pasttimes that detract from my health, my progress in school, and my self-respect.

I shall extend that sympathy and encouragement to my associates which I feel so keenly the need of myself.<sup>30</sup>

The fact that the students appreciated such counsel has already been demonstrated, but such abilities as he possessed did not go unnoticed by his superiors either. State Superintendent of Public Schools, E. G. Gowans, once said to him, "you have the best high school in the State of Utah."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Adam S. Bennion, Granitian, Vol. V, p. 89.

<sup>31</sup> Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 15.



As a final token of the esteem his students held for him, they officially dedicated their annual books to him in both 1914 and 1915. The message penned in 1915 reads: "To our principal and benefactor, Mr. Adam S. Bennion, who, through his sincere interest, has made the fifteen class a success, we dedicate this, our annual of nineteen hundred and fifteen."<sup>32</sup>

#### University of Utah

After five happy and successful years at Granite, a new challenge was presented in the form of an invitation to join the faculty at the University of Utah. He was assigned to the English Department, and was at once reunited with an old friend Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, who had been his principal at LDS High School, and now served as head of the English Department at the University.<sup>33</sup>

As he commenced this new assignment in the fall of 1917, it was quite natural to see included among the classes he taught, English literature, poetry, composition and drama. During his two-year tenure at the University, he was given opportunity to teach most of the English courses offered, as well as several courses in the field of education. "He had new ideas that were daring, creative, and functional. However, many of these ideas were in advance of his time.

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<sup>32</sup>Granitian, Commencement Number, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup>Gold and Blue, op. cit., commencement number 1911, p. 9.

It did not take Bennion long to adjust to his new challenge, and he almost immediately became affiliated with the Varsity Dramatic Club.<sup>35</sup>

According to the University of Utah student newspaper, a portion of Bennion's time during 1918 and 1919 was spent in collaborating with O. J. P. Widtsoe in the writing of textbooks.

Profs. O. J. P. Widtsoe and Adam S. Bennion of the English Department of the University are collaborating in the production of a new text book for high school English. The book is designed to meet fully the requirements of the ninth grade. With this as a beginning, these men have in mind the development of a series of English texts that will cover the entire high school period. This new work . . . is well under way . . . and the authors are in communication with a number of publishing houses, and prospects for making a satisfactory disposal of the manuscript are very encouraging.<sup>36</sup>

The following year he completed still another text,<sup>37</sup> illustrating the confidence placed in his writing ability by his superiors.

During his sojourn at the "U", he was in demand as a public speaker, often being asked to speak at literary functions, such as Sigma Upsilon, the National Literary Fraternity,<sup>38</sup> and the Oasis Debating Society.<sup>39</sup>

He continued, on a university level, to maintain a high interest in student activities. On one occasion, prior to a football game with

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<sup>35</sup>News item in the University of Utah Chronicle, December 10, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., January 24, 1918, p. 3.      <sup>37</sup>Ibid., January 20, 1919, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., November 12, 1917, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., May 1, 1919, p. 2.



Utah State, when the enthusiasm for the encounter was running fever pitch, he was asked to comment on the game's outcome. Following was his reply:

Napolean met his Waterloo, so will the Aggies. There's a spell in the occasion.

W - Will to win.

A - Atmosphere of determination.

T - Tons of grit.

E - Everybody at the game.

R - Rah Rahs of a big voice and a big heart.

L - Loyalty to Old Crimson.

O - Optimism - that knows only victory.

O - Oh! - You Utah.<sup>40</sup>

Needless to say, this display of talent and school spirit helped to endear Adam Bennion to the hearts of his students. "His popularity at the University soared. Students loved his classes as they were provocative, challenging, reasonable, and meaningful,"<sup>41</sup> all of which are mainstays in his philosophy of education.

However, his activity at the University came to an abrupt end. In the summer of 1919 came a new assignment, this time from his Church. President Heber J. Grant, sustained by Mr. Bennion as a Prophet of God,

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., November 28, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>41</sup>Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 19.

asked him if he would accept the assignment of Superintendent of L.D.S. Church Education. His answer was made public in the June 10 issue of the Salt Lake Tribune.

Professor Adam S. Bennion, Associate Professor of English of the University of Utah, a member of the General Sunday School Board of the LDS Church was yesterday named successor to Horace H. Cummings as superintendent of the church schools. He will serve under the new Commission of Education established in church schools which is composed of David O. McKay, Stephen L. Richards, and Richard R. Lyman.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>News item in the Salt Lake Tribune, June 10, 1919.



## CHAPTER IV

### HIS ROLE AS SUPERINTENDENT OF L.D.S. CHURCH EDUCATION

#### Appointment And Duties

In a special meeting of the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles held in the Salt Lake Temple, April 3, 1919, it was decided by a unanimous vote that David O. McKay be appointed as Commissioner of Education for the Church, with Stephen L. Richards as First Assistant Commissioner and Richard R. Lyman as Second Assistant Commissioner.<sup>1</sup> This action marked the beginning of a change in administrative organization for Church education. Heretofore educational administration had been left primarily to the Superintendent of Church Schools, who was directly responsible to the General Church Board of Education.<sup>2</sup> This Board, presided over by the First Presidency, had been organized in 1888 for the purpose of determining educational policy for the Church.

The new commissioners, all members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, assumed their responsibilities on July 1, 1919. At that time their duties were specified as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board of Education, held July 16, 1919; on file at Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City.

<sup>2</sup> Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (December 20, 1919), hereinafter cited as Journal History.

Upon them, in cooperation with the general church board of education rests the responsibility of determining the educational policy of the Church, of recommending the amount and distribution of Church appropriations for education, of selecting the Church school superintendent, of approving presidents, principals, and teachers as recommended by local boards of education and the Church school superintendent, and of calling conventions of Church school teachers.<sup>3</sup>

One of their first assignments, after receiving and accepting the resignation of Superintendent Horace H. Cummings, who also resigned as a member of the Board, was to select Adam S. Bennion as the new superintendent. His duties likewise were to begin on July 1.<sup>4</sup> His duties, mainly administrative in nature as opposed to the commission's executive call, were spelled out in some detail. They follow:

. . . he has become the educational executive of the commission of education, being charged with the responsibility of seeing that efficient standards are maintained in the various Church schools, of recommending in connection with local boards, president, principals, and teachers, of recommending changes in policy designed to improve the standards of the schools and of making regular visits to the various schools to see that they are effecting the work for which they have been instituted.<sup>5</sup>

Superintendent Bennion wasted very little time in executing his responsibilities. The first month was spent with Superintendent Cummings, learning as much as he could about his assignment. His earnestness and intelligence caused Cummings to remark in a general board meeting held July 16, that "he is taking hold of this work in a splendid manner. He is a man of clear intellect, sound judgement, not excitable, and seems

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>News item in the Deseret Evening News, June 25, 1919.

<sup>5</sup>Journal History (December 20, 1919).



to be a very wise choice."<sup>6</sup>

The next few months were spent in visiting the Church Schools, where he learned first hand of some of the problems existing in the academies. During one trip into Idaho in August, he learned of an experiment being conducted with summer school projects. Instead of the students attending classes eight or nine months, they were registering for twelve months, seven of which would be spent in the school room and the other five to be spent on some field project of the student's choosing. Superintendent Bennion was at first impressed with the idea, and certainly agreed with the need for practical achievement, but he was also quick to diagnose the weak link in the program. He said, "in order to make this summer work complete, the instructor must broaden his vision from the school room and take part himself in his summer vacations in practical life."<sup>7</sup>

Although this program did not succeed too well, and was soon abandoned, it did serve as an impetus for thought, and helped Bennion to formulate some ideas relative to teachers' professional responsibility. It was not long after this that he proposed the twelve month year for all Church school teachers.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, July 16, 1919.

<sup>7</sup> Journal History (August 21, 1919).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., April 4, 1922.

Another notable recommendation made during this first year of his administration was that all Church school teachers become members of the Utah Education Association. This, as were most of his recommendations, was accepted, and the teachers were asked to meet with other U.E.A. teachers in their convention in December, 1919. Heretofore, the Church school teachers had held a separate convention in the early summer.<sup>9</sup>

This recommendation on Bennion's part was not surprising, considering his experience in the public schools. Having been both teacher and administrator there, he did not share some of the fears and prejudices of some other Church educators. He felt there were valuable ideas and experiences to be shared in association with public school teachers, and being the professional that he was, certainly wanted those in his charge to be recipients of these ideas and experiences. He brought a whole new professionalism to his office, the evidence of which will be unfolded in the pages that follow.

One of the problems he faced in the new organization was that he was not invited to present his ideas and recommendations personally to the Board. He worked closely with the commissioners, who in turn became his spokesmen before the Board. In some cases this type of arrangement naturally caused some communications problems. However, in May of 1925, after having petitioned the Board for the privilege to come personally, he was not only granted the privilege, but also made a member of the

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., December 7, 1919.



Board.<sup>10</sup> At this same time the commissioners were released as such, and an executive or advisory committee was appointed from the Board. Superintendent Bennion was included as a member of this committee.<sup>11</sup> However, prior to the time of this change, in January of 1922, it should be noted that John A. Widtsoe was appointed to replace David O. McKay as Commissioner. Stephen L. Richards and Richard R. Lyman remained in their respective assignments as Assistant Commissioners.<sup>12</sup> It was through them (Commissioners McKay and Widtsoe) that Bennion made proposals and recommendations to the Board, including the policy of 1920.

#### The Policy of 1920

Although Superintendent Bennion had been in his assignment less than a year, it was obvious to him that the Church could not afford to continue to compete with the public schools in secondary education. 90 per cent of the secondary students in Utah attended public schools, whereas the Church schools provided secondary education for only 8 per cent.<sup>13</sup> Further, a precedent had already been set in 1890 with the establishment of the Religion Class for L.D.S. elementary students attending public schools. Further, since the aim of the Church was to provide a sound religious education along with sound secular training,

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<sup>10</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, May 6, 1925.

<sup>11</sup> M. Lynn Bennion, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>12</sup> Journal History (January 26, 1922).

<sup>13</sup> Turner, op. cit., p. 65.

and since the Seminary was doing such an excellent job of providing the religious educational supplement to the secular education offered in the public schools, and since seminary operation could be maintained for about one-eighth the cost of maintaining a Church academy, it was obvious to Bennion that the Church should withdraw from competition with the public schools in secular education. He felt that the Church should formulate a policy to establish seminaries wherever and whenever the local stakes requested them and there was evidence to warrant their success.

Therefore, at a meeting of the General Church Board, held March 3, 1920, the following letter was read, outlining the proposed policy change:

Dear Brethren:

For several months past your Church School Commissioners and Superintendent have been making observations in the different stakes and giving careful study to the Church School system with a view of determining, if possible, upon a definite future policy. The problem of maintaining the present number of schools is a most difficult one, especially so in the light of the absolute necessity of increasing the teachers' salaries in much greater proportion than either the Church or the State has hitherto done.

It is manifestly impossible, under present conditions, to increase the number of academies, though not a few stakes are earnestly hoping that this be done. It is not an easy matter to satisfy these petitioners when they claim that other stakes more favorably situated as regards centers of learning than they, have the benefit of these educational centers. The limit of the Church finances, however, has definitely limited the number of academies, but it does seem advisable that some plan should be devised that might have more general application than the present system.

Following the lead of the Church in establishing academies, the state is now supporting high schools in every county, and in several of the larger towns. In many of these high school districts, the patrons are mostly members of the Church; subsequently, if there is



an academy in the same district, half the boys and girls of the Church are attending the State high school and half the academy.

Associated with some of these high schools, have been seminaries wherein courses in theology and church history and doctrine have been given to the boys and girls who could be induced to register in the classes. The success of these classes has been as varying as the ability and leadership of the principals.

The seminary, as now taught, is not a substitute for the academy. We believe, however, that it may be made more nearly so by the adoption of certain policies.

We submit, therefore, the following for your careful consideration and action:

I. Eliminate the following academies, either

1. By selling the buildings and grounds to the state to be used as high schools, or
2. By using the property for other Church purposes:

Emery Academy	Unitah Academy
Murdock Academy	Gila Academy
St. John's Academy	Snowflake Academy
Cassia Academy and possibly	Oneida Academy

II. Establish a two years' Normal College Course in centers supporting the following schools:

B. Y. University	Ricks Normal College
B. Y. College	Weber Normal College
Snow Normal College	Dixie Normal College

Under our present system our seminary work is too theoretical. Indeed it is practically all instruction and no action - no application. To overcome this defect, and to make it a potent factor in influencing the high school students in religious principles, we recommend:

III. That the field of seminary work be extended and that graduation from the Church seminary require:

1. A completion of the theological studies prescribed in the course of study.
2. Certain attainments in regard to personal habits.

3. Definite service in quorums of the Priesthood and auxiliary organizations of the Church.

To accomplish this, it is suggested that the seminary principal cooperate with the officers in the quorums of Priesthood and auxiliary organizations in directing the activities of the students, and that he keep careful records of this weekly activity. To do this effectively it is apparent that he must keep in close touch with the officers of the various associations in which his students function.

IV. It will undoubtedly be necessary as well as advisable to establish such seminaries in connection with the high schools in our larger centers, even where our normal colleges are established in order that the Latter-day Saint students attending these high schools may receive such religious development as the seminaries offer.<sup>14</sup>

This letter was signed by the commissioners and Superintendent Bennion.

It is interesting to note that although this policy change called for the abolishment of the academies in favor of seminaries, Bennion did not look upon the latter as a panacea of righteousness. He recognized problems with them, namely that they were too subject-centered, emphasizing theological and theoretical principles at the expense of practical application of gospel principles. Hence, part of the proposal was an attempt to strengthen that weakness.

Another interesting proposal submitted in the letter was to establish two-year Normal Courses in various areas of the Church. This was done to insure a means of helping to provide the public schools with

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<sup>14</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, March 3, 1920.



Latter-day Saint teachers. If Latter-day Saints were to be instructed in the public schools, the Church wanted to be somewhat responsible for placing L.D.S. teachers in the public schools.

After these proposals had been discussed at length, it was decided that no formal action would be taken until further thought be given the matter. Consequently, at a later meeting, held March 15, the above proposals were adopted as formal Church policy.<sup>15</sup>

However, although the policy had been enacted, the actual follow-through was another matter. For sound financial reasons the Church leaders were in favor, but there were many in the Church, among whom were teachers and administrators in the academies, that were opposed. Consequently it took time to sell many people in the Church on the wisdom of such a move. However, Bennion tackled this problem optimistically through an instructional process. In the July, 1920 issue of the Improvement Era he reported the following:

Wherever the public high school is established, it is sustained by the Latter-day Saints, and within the last ten years a unique method of cooperation has been hit upon that helps to solve the problem of supplementing the public school curriculum with religious training. The Seminary, not the graded Church school referred to earlier in this paper, but an institution built to supplement regular high school work with theological instruction, gives promise of wonderful results. The Seminary is a small building erected as near as possible to the public high school to which the students may go when not engaged in classes at the high school for their religious

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.



training. Regular courses in Bible Study, Book of Mormon, and Church History and Doctrine are offered and pursued, as are the subjects offered in the high school. Men with college degrees conduct the work and the courses in the Bible count regularly toward high school graduation. To date nineteen Seminaries with an enrollment of three thousand students are in operation. The basis for the work done, of course, is scripture study, but plans are now being evolved which will make the instruction function more fully and adequately in Church service and in the achievement of certain ideals in the matter of personal habits of life.<sup>16</sup>

And again in September of the following year, he stated:

. . . the facts sound two unmistakable warnings: clearly we are not stamping upon all of our young people the ideals of their forefathers and just as clearly we are laying therefore a foundation for religious indifference that is alarming . . . this article, in keeping with the spirit of the press generally, is a plea, as a partial solution at least, for a return to the religious ideals of our fathers . . .

Fortunately we have in our Church the means whereby these desirable objectives may easily be achieved. For years past our young men and women who have attended our Church Schools have received daily instruction in theology—have been trained in their relationship with God and in the obligations to live up to Christian ideals. The Seminary promises to be the institution which will make this instruction more and more generally possible. If present plans are carried out there will be seminaries operated in many areas of the Church.

These seminaries are presided over by expert teachers of theology men well trained and eminently fitted to be the spiritual advisers of our boys and girls. In these institutions students can elect, as they do their regular high school work, a course in theology. They

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<sup>16</sup> Adam S. Bennion, "Latter-day Saints and Education," Improvement Era, Vol. XXIII (July, 1920), p. 780.

<sup>17</sup> Adam S. Bennion, "Preserving the Faith of Our Fathers and Mothers," Relief Society Magazine, Vol. VIII (September, 1921).



simply go over to the seminary instead of going into a high school class room. Courses are offered in Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History and Doctrine. The Seminary Principals have spent the first six weeks of this summer perfecting the outlines to be used in these various courses and have worked out one of the best contributions yet made to our study of theological problems.

Surely every Latter-day Saint parent should urge his children to enroll as Seminary students. As such they will acquire a religious background for their lives. Boys and girls will be trained for missionary service. More than that they will be inspired with ideals of life that will lead them safely past the temptations of youth and will make them parents who can build homes where the spirit and teachings of the Lord can attend the nurture of the unborn spirits on whom the responsibility of carrying on this great work will rest in another generation.<sup>17</sup>

The actual conversion of the academies to state schools was a slow process. Not only did the local leaders need to be sold in some instances, but it was not always immediately possible for the local districts to raise sufficient funds to purchase the buildings and property from the Church. However, in just about every case the Church generously sold the property at a fraction of its worth, to facilitate a smooth transfer. Even so, only three schools had been transferred during the first year and nine months of the new policy. In a meeting of the General Board on December 13, 1921, the following was reported:

The three academies converted into public high schools to date, namely Cassia, St. Johns, and Knight, are doing well. The Cassia school has the largest enrollment to date, and President W. T. Jack, who at one time was opposed to converting the school, is now highly pleased with the result. The same may be said with reference to the St. Johns.

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<sup>17</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "Preserving the Faith of Our Fathers and Mothers," Relief Society Magazine, Vol. VIII (September, 1921).



The Commission now recommended the conversion of five more schools next year, and that these schools be advised at once of the proposed change which will effect a saving in the appropriation of nearly \$75,000. . . .

President Grant expressed his approval of the Commissions's action in converting some of the Church Schools into public high schools and expressed the hope that they would consider the propriety of eliminating still more schools.<sup>18</sup>

And so, even though the process moved slowly, it was still very much Church policy to eliminate the academies in favor of seminaries, and according to Bennion, seminary "is now one of the most important phases of the Church school activities."<sup>19</sup> He reported that by September of 1921, 27 seminaries were in operation, with an enrollment of some 5,000 to 6,000 students.<sup>20</sup>

With creation of so many new seminaries, some questions were raised relative to the financial responsibility of the local people regarding them. One interesting note from the minutes of the General Board meeting of October 27, 1920 not only set a precedent, but also established a policy still in effect today:

The Presidency of Granite Stake objects to raising funds for maintaining the seminary.

So far, the policy of the Board has been to have the stakes erect the building, furnish and maintain it, and the Church to appropriate for the teachers. Unless this policy be changed, the Commission recommend that no exception be made in the case of the Granite

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<sup>18</sup>Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, Dec. 13, 1921.

<sup>19</sup>Journal History (September 7, 1921).

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.



Seminary and that the stakes in that district be required to provide the expense for maintaining the buildings.<sup>21</sup>

Also, as a measure to further cutback financial expenditures during this period, it was decided by the Board, acting on Bennion's recommendation, to eliminate all ninth grade work in the academies. The public schools of Utah were, at that time, in a position to assimilate all these ninth grade students.<sup>22</sup>

There were also some minor policies established during the early part of 1920, all of which dealt with clarification of Bennion's responsibility and authority. He requested the following, all of which was approved.

(1) the channel of communication between the Brigham Young University, the Latter-day Saints University, and the Brigham Young College boards of education and the General Church Board of Education was to run via the Church Superintendent of Schools and the Church Commission of Education; (2) presidents or principals of Church Schools should not be chosen without the approval of the Commission and the Superintendent of Church Schools; (3) the Superintendent of Church Schools must be consulted by the local boards in the selection of teachers.<sup>23</sup>

With the formulation of these policies, the Superintendent's office was definitely strengthened, and indicates to some extent the confidence placed in Bennion by his superiors.

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<sup>21</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, October 27, 1920.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., December 1, 1920.

<sup>23</sup> Royal R. Meservy, "A Historical Study of Changes in Policy of Higher Education in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of California, L. A., 1966), p. 307.

This confidence was expressed anew a short time later, when Adam requested and received a leave of absence to attend the University of California to obtain his doctorate degree.

#### Time Out For Additional Education

In his commencement address to the B.Y.U. graduating class of 1953, Bennion made reference to an earlier B.Y.U. commencement that had inspired him to seek more education. He said:

I would that I could do for somebody in this group what was done for me, not in this hall, but in this institution, 32 years ago. At that time I was Superintendent of Schools. I came down here with a master's degree, and I think I sat through a morning of the greatest embarrassment of my life because the men and women of this faculty were very well trained, as they now are, and many of them had their Ph. D's, and I sat, presumably in a position of leadership.

As I sat through that morning's program, I resolved that never again would I come to a B.Y.U. commencement without the higher degree. Within two months I had picked up the family, the wife and four children, and entered the University of California, where for two years I put in the most vigorous work I have ever done. I shall be grateful all the days of my life, that as I sat in one commencement program an idea was burned into my soul on which I went to work.<sup>24</sup>

And went to work he did, not only taking courses in educational administration, philosophy and English, but also teaching part time to help make ends meet with his little family. Speaking of an incident that transpired during his stay at Berkeley, he said:

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<sup>24</sup> Adam S. Bennion, "Yours is A Wonderful Heritage," Brigham Young Alumnus, Vol. VI (June 1953), p. 23-4.



We went to California with four children to get the Ph.D. Degree. Don't tell me it's easy. I know it isn't. But that last year I was teaching in the Department of Education at Cal. and I was also teaching in a private school to get enough to pay the rent. And that school . . . that private school . . . White's Preparatory School in the hills of Berkeley was attended by boys that had been kicked out of all the other high schools in California. And, when I went up there . . . they said "Here's your course of study." My first task was to teach that bunch of roughnecks Milton's "Paradise Lost." Well, I could just see myself thrown out of that group. But I conceived an idea, and next day when I went over to meet that class, I wish you could have seen them. They hadn't been thrown out for nothing. I said, "Have you fellows ever been in hell?" One boy said, "No, I don't reckon I've been there, but I've sure had a lot of it."

"Maybe you'd be interested. Why don't we take a trip. How would you like to go down and see what went on?" I hope I'll be forgiven someday . . . the way I introduced Paradise Lost by a trip to hell. I've never had such a capable group of actors. For at least one semester, we got through . . . I didn't get fired, and I paid the rent.<sup>25</sup>

This additional load of teaching, plus his regular course work, coupled with the research and writing of his dissertation, all made a very full program for Adam. Notwithstanding, he was able to complete all of the requirements in less than a two-year period, and received his degree on December 17, 1923. And, he did it all with honors.<sup>26</sup>

Evidence of the quality of his scholarship was given in the form of a tribute by Dr. Cyrus Mead, Professor of education at the University of California. While speaking at the B.Y.U. summer school in 1923, he said, "there is no nobler representative of the Church than Adam Bennion,

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<sup>25</sup> Adam S. Bennion, Annual Pharmacy Lectures, Ann Arbor, Michigan, October 29, 1953 (found in Folder 1469, Bennion Manuscripts).

<sup>26</sup> Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 21.

Superintendent of your Church schools. When Superintendent Bennion comes back, if we cannot keep him, he will make your schools, Church or secular second to none in the United States."<sup>27</sup>

Since the seminary program was his great interest, it is only natural that his doctoral study should revolve around some problem related to it. His observation had been that not all Bible study was conducive to producing a behavioral change in the life of the student. As already attested by part of his proposal in the policy of 1920, application of the moral teachings of the Bible on the part of the student was the most justifiable reason for teaching the Bible. Hence his study centered in an attempt to determine what parts of the Bible might produce the best results. His dissertation was entitled, "An Objective Determination of Materials for a Course of Study in Biblical Literature."<sup>28</sup> Further will be said later concerning the results of his study.

During his absence several interesting changes occurred. One was the appointment of Dr. Widtsoe to replace Commissioner McKay, and another was the placing of the Religion Class work under the supervision of the General Church Board of Education. This addition, coupled with Bennion's absence, increased the work load of the commission. In an October, 1922 meeting of the Board, the following was discussed:

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<sup>27</sup> News item in the Deseret Evening News, July 6, 1923.

<sup>28</sup> Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 21.



Owing to the absence of Supt. Bennion, a lot of detail work falls on the commission. To help in this direction Stephen L. Richards moved that the commission be empowered to employ all, or part, of the time of Franklin S. Davis for assistance in the general work of the commission, including the Religion Class work."<sup>29</sup>

So although his absence was sorely felt, when he returned on December 19, 1923, he plunged himself anew into the many responsibilities of his office.<sup>30</sup>

#### The Rise And Growth Of Seminary

On his return, Bennion at once sensed a feeling of conservatism on the part of the Board relative to disbursement of funds for education. It was not that the leaders of the Church felt any less inclined toward education, it was just a period of financial hard times for the Church. In a meeting of the Board held April 15, 1922, "it was the sentiment of the Board, as expressed by Presidents Grant and Ivins, that it would be wise to proceed very slowly in the establishment of new seminaries until the Church is in better financial condition."<sup>31</sup> And even as late as October 9, 1923, this feeling was still paramount, as evidenced by the following:

Bear River Stake requests a seminary at Tremonton, where they have 500 students. They have been advised that nothing can be done at

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<sup>29</sup>Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, October 18, 1922.

<sup>30</sup>News item in the Deseret News, December 19, 1923.

<sup>31</sup>Minutes of the meeting of the Church General Board, April 15, 1922.

present, but they desire authority to collect a building fund in anticipation of being granted a seminary later on. The commission feels that this is a spirit that should be encouraged, and the authority requested was granted.<sup>32</sup>

Bennion was greatly aware of this financial problem. In fact, it had been this problem which prompted his proposal in the policy of 1920. Nevertheless, he was convinced that seminary was the logical, sensible, solution to the problem. During the remaining years of his administration, though saddled with other responsibilities, he vigorously worked to increase and improve the then budding seminary program.

In 1919, when Bennion commenced his administration, there were twelve seminaries in operation<sup>33</sup> with an enrollment of 1,528 students.<sup>34</sup> By the end of his term at the close of 1927, the figure had risen to seventy seminaries, serving seventy-nine high schools; forty-eight in Utah, seventeen in Idaho, four in Wyoming, two in Colorado, and eight in Arizona, with an enrollment of 11,500 students.<sup>35</sup> This represents an increase of almost ten times the number in 1919. This figure is significant when one considers that it took another twenty years, following the Bennion administration, before seminary enrollment would again even

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., October 9, 1923.

<sup>33</sup>Journal History (December 25, 1927).

<sup>34</sup>John K. Child, "A Study of the Comparisons Between the Academic Achievements in B.Y.U. Religion Courses of L.D.S. Students who Had Not Attended L.D.S. Seminaries" (unpublished Masters thesis, Brigham Young University, 1967), p. 22.

<sup>35</sup>Journal History (December 25, 1927).



TABLE II<sup>36</sup>

## SEMINARY GROWTH DURING BENNION ADMINISTRATION

Year	Number of Seminaries	Enrollment
1919-20	20	3,272
1920-21	22	2,980
1921-22	23	3,036
1922-23	33	4,976
1923-24	39	6,401
1924-25	53	8,324
1925-26	59	10,376
1926-27	64	10,855
1927-28	70	11,500

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

TABLE III  
EXTENT OF SEMINARY PROGRAM IN 1927-28

Seminary	Location	Teacher
American Fork	American Fork, Utah	E. Ray Gardner
Barnes, John R.	Kaysville, Utah	Geo. C. Ensign
Bear River	Garland, Utah	W. W. Richards
		C. J. Jenson
Beaver	Beaver, Utah	Cecil McGavin
Bicknell	Bicknell, Utah	James DeBry
Blanding	Blanding, Utah	Wayne H. Redd
Box Elder	Brigham, Utah	Abel S. Rich
		Margaret Gardner
Burley	Burley, Idaho	D. D. Lamph
Castle Dale-Ferron	Castle Dale, Utah	N. L. Williams
Cedar City	Cedar City, Utah	Gustive O. Larson
Coalville	Coalville, Utah	Lester M. Norberg
Cyprus	Magna, Utah	Silas L. Cheney
Delta	Delta, Utah	Milton Moody
Driggs	Driggs, Utah	Frank W. McGhie
Ephraim	Ephraim, Utah	Newton E. Noyes
Escalante	Escalante, Utah	Elwood B. Allred
Fielding	Paris, Idaho	Roy A. Welker
Franklin County	Preston, Idaho	J. E. Fisher
		Daryl Chase
Grace	Grace, Idaho	J. Lyman Smith
Granite	Salt Lake City, Utah	J. M. Whitaker
		K. K. Blacker
		Ezra C. Dalby
Grantsville	Grantsville, Utah	D. Stanley Adams
Gunnison	Gunnison, Utah	LeRoy Whitehead
Hinckley	Hinckley, Utah	Floyd G. Eyre
Huntington	Huntington, Utah	Ruel L. Jensen
Hurricane	Hurricane, Utah	Jesse P. Rich
Jordan	Sandy, Utah	Carter E. Grant
		Enoch Jorgensen
Kamas	Kamas, Utah	Russell Swenson
Kanab	Kanab, Utah	Fred M. Fowler
Lehi	Lehi, Utah	A. B. Anderson
Lincoln	Provo, Utah	V. C. Anderson
Logan	Logan, Utah	E. J. Passey
		L. R. Robinson
		A. Eldon Rex
Lovell-Cowley	Lovell, Wyoming	Joseph S. Fish
Lyman	Lyman, Wyoming	Lloyd O. Ivie
Malad	Malad, Idaho	Harold W. Lawrence



TABLE III Continued

Seminary	Location	Teacher
Manassa-Sanford	Manassa, Colorado	Owen Romney
Manti	Manti, Utah	R. Lee Kenner
Mesa-Chandler-Gilbert	Mesa, Arizona	Joseph R. Wilkins
Midway	Menan, Idaho	M. D. Clayson
Millard	Fillmore, Utah	Hyrum P. Jones
Monroe	Monroe, Utah	Heber D. Clark
Montpelier	Montpelier, Idaho	S. H. Spencer
Morgan	Morgan, Utah	E. H. Mecham
Moroni	Moroni, Utah	Newel K. Young
Moscow	Moscow, Idaho	J. Wyley Sessions
Mt. Pleasant	Mt. Pleasant, Utah	A. H. Anderson
Murray	Murray, Utah	Ernest Bramwell
Nephi	Nephi, Utah	Don M. Rees
North Cache	Richmond, Utah	Elijah M. Hicken
		Lynn Bennion
North Sevier	Salina, Utah	Ernest Frandsen
Oakley	Oakley, Idaho	George A. Smith
Payson	Payson, Utah	John F. Oleson
Pleasant Grove	Pleasant Grove, Utah	Sam D. Moore, Jr.
Pocatello	Pocatello, Idaho	Sidney B. Sperry
Provo	Provo, Utah	Jesse A. Washburn
		Alvah Fitzgerald
		Harold G. Clark
Rexburg	Rexburg, Idaho	Cecil Merkley
Richfield	Richfield, Utah	J. W. Olsen
		Geo. H. Curry
Rigby	Rigby, Idaho	Wm. E. Berrett
Roosevelt	Roosevelt, Utah	Albert E. Sells
Rupert	Rupert, Idaho	Jesse L. Roberts
Shelley	Shelley, Idaho	R. B. Holbrook
Snowflake	Snowflake, Arizona	Wm. C. Smith
South Cache	Hyrum, Utah	J. Karl Wood
		M. W. Smith
Spanish Fork	Spanish Fork, Utah	Obert Tanner
Springville	Springville, Utah	Wm. T. Tew Jr.
Sugar City-Teton	Sugar City, Idaho	Geo. S. Tanner
St. Johns-Eager	St. Johns, Arizona	R. W. Green
Tooele	Tooele, Utah	LeRoi, Bentley
Vernal	Vernal, Utah	Jacob N. Lybbert
Wasatch	Heber, Utah	D. A. Broadvent

This table was taken from Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1593.

double,<sup>37</sup> indicative of the great interest and energy given to it by Bennion. It is interesting to note also, that the seminary growth did not really get off the ground until Bennion returned from California to devote his time and energy to it. However, since 1951 there has been phenomenal growth, in that currently (1968) the Church maintains 209 released-time seminaries with a total enrollment of 63,793 students.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the Church maintains 2,002 non-released time seminary classes serving an additional 40,515 students. Seminary is now held in forty-nine of the states, and in seven foreign countries.<sup>39</sup>

However, as great as the program is today, it was Bennion that inaugurated the success of the program. According to William E. Berrett, current administrator of all the seminaries of the Church, "prior to his time seminaries were experimental. He put them on a permanent basis."<sup>40</sup>

During his administration, several interesting developments occurred relative to the success of seminary. One study was made in 1926 by E. A. Jones, wherein he tried to measure the effect seminary was having in the lives of students. His conclusion is interesting, and follows:

From the test (study) just analyzed we may safely conclude that the seminary students are superior to the non-seminary students as

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<sup>37</sup>Child, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>38</sup>Seminaries and Institutes of the Church, 1967-68 Bulletin.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Interview with William E. Berrett, February 19, 1969.



far as what the Church officials and teachers would consider the standard to be. Whether the seminary instruction is responsible for any of this difference, or whether the students started school with this difference, is not known.<sup>41</sup>

Even though it was difficult for Jones to measure, at least there were some of the students who felt that the seminary experience was very worthwhile. The following from the "Snowflake Seminary Beacon" will serve as an example.

It would be utterly impossible to make a complete report of our Seminary accomplishments. For it has been an inspiration to us. It has broadened our views of the principles of the gospel. It has strengthened our testimony concerning the divinity of the Book of Mormon. It has proved that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. It has, through the study of the trials of the saints in the early days of the Church, put an incentive into our hearts to live better lives. And it has developed leadership by giving each student the privilege to take charge of the preliminary exercises of our classes . . .

We do not intend to stop with the noble ideals and efforts that our Seminary work has inspired in us but we intend to put them into action. Although dreams and thoughts are essential to doing something worthwhile in our life or to even becoming good citizens it is more essential that we strive to make them come to pass. It is with this end in view that the Seminary students are leaving the Seminary this year.<sup>42</sup>

Also, in 1922, the first seminary graduation was held. This involved sixteen graduates from the Jordan Seminary in Sandy, Utah.

Also during this period a policy was formulated outlining the further responsibilities of the stakes for seminary.

When the Oneida Academy closed this year the Board of Trustees

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<sup>41</sup>E. A. Jones, "A Study of the Results of Seminary Teaching Upon The Attitudes Of Students Who Attend The Seminaries" (unpublished Master's thesis, Utah State Agricultural College, 1926), p. 58

<sup>42</sup>Claire Slosser, The Snowflake Seminary Beacon, Snowflake, Arizona, Vol. II (1926), p. 11 (this document was found at Church Historian's Office).

took over the trusteeship of the new seminary, leaving out some of the stake presidents and others interested in seminary.

So the commission recommends that the seminaries be controlled by the boards of education of the stakes served by the seminary. If the seminary serves only one stake, then the board of education, including the presidency of the stake, becomes ex officio the board. If more than one stake is served, then two or more stake boards become the controlling body, and they may elect an executive committee to directly supervise the seminary.<sup>43</sup>

This recommendation was approved on motion of Rudger Clawson, a member of the General Board.<sup>44</sup> This policy is still in effect today, placing not only financial, but also supervisory responsibility on the stakes. Thus seminary, although employing professional teachers, hired and appointed by the General Board, is operated by the local ecclesiastical authorities in the stakes.

#### Aims And Objectives Of Seminary

Much of the classroom work in the first seminaries was a carry over from the theological class held in the academies. It consisted, in large measure, of scripture memorization and recitation, reading of the scriptures, and preparation and presentation of short talks by the students.<sup>45</sup> However, Bennion at once recognized the need for more practical application. As early as 1921 he stated:

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<sup>43</sup>From Jordan Stake Quarterly Conference Report, Journal History (May 13, 1922).

<sup>44</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the General Church Board, February 7, 1923.

<sup>45</sup>Journal History (December 5, 1919).



The seminary aims not only to teach the facts of scripture but endeavors to stimulate students to form habits of religious life and service that make for character. Each student records through the office of the principal his religious activities.

Furthermore, seminary students participate frequently in public religious meetings, furnishing entire programs in the various wards of the Church.<sup>46</sup>

He felt that the key to a successful program was two-fold; first of all, to employ only the best instructors, paying them more than the average public school teacher, and the setting of definite goals and objectives for both teachers and students. Regarding the first of these keys, he said:

These schools are dedicated to the principle that no mere teaching of ethics or morals, or philosophy, offers a complete basis for the proper development of human character. They exist to teach that a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ and an appreciation of man's relationship and obligation to God are essential to the living of a complete Christian life. They aim to teach such principles and in such a manner that students enjoy in their school life an atmosphere of real applied Christianity. They teach the word of the Lord in the hope that that word will enter into and direct the lives of those thus taught. Naturally, certain standards are held to that are more or less unique among Latter-day Saints. In the first place, teachers are employed whose training includes both academic and religious instruction. No teacher is employed who uses tobacco or liquor and practically none of them indulges in tea, coffee or any other stimulant. The Church selects its teachers upon the basis that the best way to teach religion is to live it. The ideal of a clean life is the desideratum in the choice of every teacher in the system.

Then, too, teachers are sought whose spiritual glow will enkindle religious enthusiasm on the part of those instructed. Mere "letter" theology seldom becomes a vital force in the formation of character.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Adam S. Bennion's Annual Report of 1921, Journal History (December 17, 1921).

<sup>47</sup> Adam S. Bennion, "Latter-day Saints' Church Schools" Utah Educational Review, Vol. XIII (May 1920) pp. 306-07.



And further:

These seminaries are presided over by expert teachers of theology, men well trained and eminently fitted to be the spiritual advisors of our boys and girls. In these institutions students can elect, as they do their regular high school work, a course in theology. They simply go over to the seminary instead of going into a high school classroom. Courses are offered in Old Testament, New Testament and Church History and Doctrine. The Seminary Principals have spent the first six weeks of this summer perfecting the outlines to be used in these various courses and have worked out one of the best contributions yet made to our study of theological problems.

Surely, every Latter-day Saint parent should urge his children to enroll as seminary students. As such they will acquire a religious background for their lives. Boys and girls will be trained for ward and missionary service. More than that they will be inspired with ideals of life that will lead them safely past the temptations of youth and will make of them parents who can build homes where the spirit and teachings of the Lord can attend the nurture of the unborn spirits on whom the responsibility of carrying on this great work will rest in another generation.<sup>48</sup>

To accomplish such achievement, certain objectives were outlined by Bennion in cooperation with the seminary teachers during the summer workshop of 1927. The general objectives follow:

Knowledge Objectives:

1. An intimate acquaintance with the word of the Lord as contained in the standard works of the Church--our Source Books.
2. A mastery, through memory, of a wealth of that word.
3. An acquaintance with its geographical, historical and social backgrounds.
4. A comprehensive understanding of the principles of the Gospel and of Church organization.
5. An appreciation of the beauties of the universe and of the laws which govern it.

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<sup>48</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "Preserving The Faith Of Our Fathers and Mothers", Relief Society Magazine, Vol. VIII (September, 1921), pp. 506-07.



6. A general grasp of the underlying principles of the world's great religions. A knowledge of the growing conception of God.
7. A consciousness of the effect both of righteousness and of unrighteousness upon life.
8. A knowledge of the high mission of man. God works through human beings.
9. A thorough acquaintance with local backgrounds and points of view.
10. An acquaintance with outstanding modern religious tendencies.
11. A knowledge of human nature and how to control and motivate it in individuals to produce the greatest happiness possible.
12. A knowledge of useful mechanical devices for preserving and using all knowledge obtained.

Objectives of Attitudes and Ideals:

1. A reverence for whatever is held sacred.
2. A respect for superiors and elders and the law.
3. A humility that makes for teachableness.
4. A faith that leads to prayer and worthy activity.
5. An ambition that leads to righteous achievement.
6. A predisposition to helpfulness toward others.
7. A sympathy for the ills and shortcomings of others: a looking for the good in them.
8. A tolerance for those who differ in opinion.
9. A liberality that welcomes all newness of truth. A scientific mindedness.
10. A cheerfulness of disposition.
11. A cooperative spirit which invites teaming.
12. A wholesome attitude toward all honest work.

13. A confidence in self, a trust of fellowmen, and a faith in God.
14. A forgiveness for all men.
15. A love that begets love.

Objectives of Habit:

1. Habits of prayer.
2. Habits of worship.
3. Habits of service, both for God and fellow.
4. Habits of clean and dynamic living.
5. Habits of right thinking.
6. Habits of participation in worthy institutional life.
7. Habits of reading good literature and of appreciating good music and the other fine arts.
8. Habits of wholesome recreation.
9. Habits of vigorous study.
10. Habits of regularity and dependability.
11. Habits of mingling with stimulating people.
12. Habits of thrift.
13. Habits of self-examination.

With these objectives in mind, the Church deems it highly desirable that Seminaries be established wherever possible and practicable. From the standpoint of character and citizenship the work of the Seminary squares absolutely with the real spirit of American institutions and traditions--it fosters American ideals in a generation which tomorrow will be our leaders.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 234.



In addition to these general objectives, specific objectives for each course were also developed,<sup>50</sup> all of which placed the seminary program on rather solid footing from the beginning. Although a few of these specific objectives have been altered from time to time as new philosophy developed, it is interesting to note that many of them are still intact and employed by the seminary program today.

One of the greatest of these objectives still in effect today is that of a personal interest in each student by his teacher. Bennion summed it up this way in 1922, when he said:

Ideally, Seminary men are men of broad human sympathies, with the power to enkindle spiritual enthusiasm, and who have besides their knowledge of the bible a rich background in science, history, sociology, and psychology . . .

Nor is the work of the Seminary limited to the learning of subject matter. Each teacher undertakes to know the life of each of his students and to check regularly on his out-of-class activities and his habit of life. As a result of this phase of the work students are encouraged to participate freely in the life of their Church organizations and are helped constantly to shape their lives in accordance with the right kind of ideals.<sup>51</sup>

#### Summer Schools-Training Periods For Seminary Teachers

At the outset of his administration it was evident to Bennion that the program of the Church needed unification. One of the best and easiest ways to accomplish this was to bring the seminary teachers

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<sup>50</sup>See Appendix A.

<sup>51</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "The Utah Plan of Religious Education for High-School Students," Religious Education, Vol. XVII (February 1922), pp. 53-4.



together for training and common association. This was accomplished by the instituting of the summer-school workshop.

During the first of these, held in the summer of 1920, standardization of courses was the big item on the agenda. Prior to this time, no actual text books other than the Scriptures had ever been used in gospel courses. Some teachers had developed their own outlines to the scriptures, but it was toward unification that the teachers were brought together in 1920. From the press in April of that year came the following announcement.

Adam Bennion of the Church school system is calling seminary principals together for the purpose of planning the seminary work, in hope that it can be made to carry over into the lives of the students. It is also planned that the work shall be such as will connect up with the regular work of Church quorums.

Three aspects of the summer work will receive especial emphasis. First the course of study of each seminary will be standardized to meet the courses in other seminaries. The outlines already being used will be added to and enriched so that the work can be made as comprehensive as possible. Second, much consideration will be given as to how to make the work tie up with Church work. The various Church auxiliaries being used by the students as laboratories in which they can work out the theories presented to them in the seminaries. Third, certain standards of ideals will be set up, toward which each student must work in a personal way. And credits will be given for accomplishments in this three-fold aspect of the work.<sup>52</sup>

The following year, when the teachers met together, these outlines were reworked and improved.<sup>53</sup> In fact, it became standard procedure in the years that followed to spend some of the summer-school time working

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<sup>52</sup>News item in the Deseret Evening News, April 14, 1920.

<sup>53</sup>Tuttle, op. cit., p. 114.



on and improving outlines. This work was carried on by committees of teachers under the supervision of Superintendent Bennion.<sup>54</sup>

Also in the 1921 summer-school the theological training of seminary teachers by various means commenced. One of the methods employed was to invite certain of the General Authorities to deliver lectures on theological subjects. It was first proposed by Bennion that certain of these brethren actually teach courses at the summer school,<sup>55</sup> but this proposal somehow never materialized. However, many of the brethren did deliver lectures that summer, among whom were Dr. James E. Talmage, Melvin J. Ballard, Joseph Fielding Smith, George F. Richards, A. W. Ivins, and David A. Smith.<sup>56</sup> This marked the beginning of one phase of theological training for seminary teachers. This practice was reinstated under President William E. Berrett, and is still carried on successfully today. In fact, according to President Berrett, "it was the experience that I had under Brother Bennion that made me want to meet summers."<sup>57</sup>

Two other means of carrying on theological training were to assign teachers to stand before their peers and present lessons to be critiqued and evaluated, and to have some of the older brethren write treatises on various gospel subjects. The latter is a practice which Berrett is attempting to "resurrect."<sup>58</sup> "All of this," according to Sidney Sperry,

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<sup>54</sup>Interview with William E. Berrett, February 19, 1969.

<sup>55</sup>Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, April 12, 1921.

<sup>56</sup>Journal History (July 19, 1921).

<sup>57</sup>Interview with William E. Berrett, February 19, 1969. <sup>58</sup>Ibid.

one of the teachers in those days, "was to make of the Church seminaries more than just a Sunday school, through trained men."<sup>59</sup>

Probably the most successful of these summer schools were held during the summers of 1926 and 1927, and were held at the summer camp in Alpine.<sup>60</sup> Prior to the 1927 session, the following memorandum was sent out to all seminary teachers. It was intended to help prepare the men for an intensive examination of themselves as they related to every phase of their work. It is interesting to note the depth and width of their curriculum that summer.

The attached questions and problems dealing with the seminary movement are the compiled result of questions raised by teachers during the past year, and are submitted herewith to serve as a basis for discussion looking toward improvement in all departments and aspects of the work . . .

It is hoped that out of the reactions to these questions may grow a handbook for seminary teachers covering all aspects of the movement, so that teachers are requested to give their best thought and experience in their contribution to this effort.

The Seminary Teacher: In His Relationship To:

1. The Board of Education: General, Stake, and Ward.
2. The Public School.
  - a. The superintendent.
  - b. The principal.
  - c. The teachers.
  - d. The curriculum.
  - e. The schedule of classes.
3. Public Service.
  - a. In the Church (Priesthood and auxiliary organizations)  
Classes for adults.

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<sup>59</sup>Interview with Sidney Sperry, February 19, 1969.

<sup>60</sup>Alpine is a summer camp area located in the Wasatch Mountains, some twenty miles east of Provo. All of the other summer sessions were held in Provo.



- b. In the community (politically, civic, etc.)
  - c. Publicity.
4. The Home.
- a. Types represented.
  - b. Standards maintained.
  - c. Attitudes fostered.
  - d. Activities carried forward.
  - e. Connections with seminary.
5. The Seminary Classroom.
- a. The building and grounds.
  - b. Decorations.
  - c. Heat and light.
  - d. Janitorial service.
  - e. Equipment.
6. Courses of Study.
- a. Testimony.
  - b. Attitude.
  - c. Knowledge.
  - d. Library.
  - e. Text books - kinds of Bible.
  - f. Outlines.
  - g. The scrapbook.
  - h. Reference books.
  - i. Newspapers and magazines.
  - j. Maps and charts.
  - k. Credit.
  - l. Substitute teachers.
7. Seminary Records.
- a. Scholastic record.
  - b. Private activity record.
  - c. Roll books.
  - d. Reports.
  - e. Transcripts of credit.
8. Methods of Teaching.
- a. Devices and methods.
  - b. How to grade outlines.
  - c. Psychology.
  - d. Amount of preparation.
  - e. Regular lesson work.
  - f. Make-up work.
  - g. Possibility of a uniform plan book.
  - h. Reviews and examination.
  - i. Standard tests.
  - j. Graduation - pin vs. diploma.

9. The Pupil.
  - a. Individual help in the classroom.
  - b. Individual help in church and community.
  - c. Personal problems.
  - d. Clique problems.<sup>61</sup>

Some of the actual discussions on some of these topics are found in Appendix B. Intensive training was also given in specific subject areas. These likewise can be found in Appendix B.

It was not "all work and no play" however, for Bennion was the kind of man who loved the out of doors, and the Alpine area lent itself to the enjoyment of vigorous physical activity. As evidence that such was a part of the curriculum is the following from the BYU newspaper.

Much of the real joy of living was evidenced in the extra-curricular activities of the Alpine summer school, sponsored by Dr. Bennion and other young-hearted professors who encouraged the division of energy between intellectual effort and real recreation.

It has been suggested that seminary teachers make it an annual meeting place for a course of instruction. "Next to nature is next to God," is the motto for the building of a greater Alpine seminary.<sup>62</sup>

One of the teachers, Obert C. Tanner, expressed his feeling for the Alpine school in the following way.

It was a glorious, inspiring summer. We were exploring, adventuring, trying to write the gospel in our own lives in our own way.

The Alpine Summer School was designed to broaden the base of all seminary men. It was his goal to broaden all men in the Church, and he certainly wanted his seminary teachers to be among the most

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<sup>61</sup> Located in the Bennion Papers, Box 7, Folder 38.

<sup>62</sup> The "Y" News, Brigham Young University School paper, August 31, 1927.



broad and intelligent men in the world.<sup>63</sup>

In the closing session of one of the summer schools, Bennion challenged the teachers to excellence, when he said, "in the towns and villages of the Church: Put on such a program that boys can't afford the time to loaf on the grocery corner, the garage concrete, or the pool hall cafeteria . . . You have a call wherever a boy or girl squanders hours aimlessly. The fellow who needs you most is the one who is farthest from looking you up."<sup>64</sup>

#### The Policy Of 1926

Owing partly to the tremendous success of the seminary program as an answer to religious instruction on a secondary level, and owing partly to the equally as tremendous financial pressures brought to bear on the Church from her institutions of higher learning, probably no greater educational meeting was ever held in the Church than the General Board Meeting held February 3, 1926. In that meeting, Superintendent Bennion submitted to the Board for its consideration, a paper entitled "An Inquiry Into Our Church School Policy." This inquiry, once raised, was to provide the basis for much discussion, extending over many meetings, relative to the future of L.D.S. education. Selected excerpts from that paper follow.

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Obert C. Tanner, February 4, 1969.

<sup>64</sup> Adam S. Bennion, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 115.



### The Issue Raised

Two applications have recently been presented to the General Board of Education which seem to make it advisable to give full consideration to the whole question of our educational program.

The first application is from the Brigham Young College in Logan, asking permission to extend its field service to cover the upper two years of high school as well as the first two years of college. The accompanying statement as prepared by the Board of Trustees of the Brigham Young College sets forth fully their reasons for the proposed change.

The second application is from the Ricks College at Rexburg, Idaho, asking that the policy of that institution be modified so that the institution may offer the regular four years of collegiate work instead of carrying forward the present program of two years of college work and two years of senior high school work. The accompanying statement indicates fully the reasons which prompt the Board of Trustees of the Ricks College to make this petition.

These two applications bring into the clear two fundamental questions.

1. Can the two-year junior college unit be made successful and can it be made an economic unit?
2. Can the Church afford further to expand its educational program?

As preliminary to an attempt to answer these two queries, it may be well to set forward certain facts and tendencies which may serve as a helpful basis in giving consideration to these problems. The enthusiasm which prompts the presidents of the two schools in question to address us in both natural and commendable.

Social as well as any other institutions cannot become static and remain successful. This is a day of great social progress and of marked educational advancement. Public schools are not only being multiplied but they are becoming increasingly complex in their organization and are demanding therefore increased equipment. When one considers that in 1890 there were 200,000 high school pupils in America and that in 1900 there were 500,000 but that in 1924 there were 3,500,000, one can appreciate the tremendous educational growth of recent years. Figures are not available to indicate the collegiate enrollment in 1890 but there is great significance in the fact that there are now 322,965 full time collegiate students in America and a total of 489,064 resident students in attendance at American Universities and colleges. To be in a field where the competition is against such growing institutions as must take care these great



numbers necessarily involves a progressive attitude and a corresponding outlay of funds.

If the requested changes should be made at the Brigham Young College and the Ricks College, it is perfectly evident that the budget for each institution must be substantially increased. The increase at the Brigham Young College will be the smaller of the two in view of an already adequate plant. A slight increase accompanied by a relatively small annual appropriation for upkeep would likely see that institution through. This institution can clearly extend the field of its service with relatively nominal increase in its expenditures.

Were the Ricks College to become a senior college it would call for a substantially increased budget along with a building program of significant proportions.

It may be well to point out that the other schools in our system if they are to keep pace with similar institutions operated by the State will have to look forward to a considerable, continuing increase of outlay in the next ten years. Weber College has already indicated building needs and campus needs which if made will run into substantial amounts. The L. D. S. University will likely not be under the necessity of asking for substantial building or equipment appropriations, but its annual budget must continue to be relatively large if we attempt to offer Church School advantages to any considerable proportion of high school pupils in Salt Lake City. The Brigham Young University is growing remarkably and is operating at a very low per capita cost. The new Library Building, which, furnished, has been supplied at the cost of \$165,000.00 is a great asset to the institution, but within the next ten years the school will likely be under the necessity of asking for a new science building, a new gymnasium, a new women's building and possibly a new class room building to provide space for such subjects as English, history, sociology, etc. The management of that institution estimates conservatively that adequately to take care of students who may be reasonably expected to attend the institution, the present budget of \$200,000 should be increased to \$300,000 within the next few years. Snow College, if it is to grow into a real college for Sanpete Valley, has already projected a building program, which in the next few years will approximate \$150,000 with a corresponding increase in annual appropriations. Dixie College seems to have fitted into a serviceable field at present and will likely not call for greatly increased appropriations unless it may be in the matter of one building, which will provide a suitable auditorium. Gila College has projected a program which involves the completion of the gymnasium now under construction, putting into good condition of their football field, the erection of an administration building and other minor improvements which will make the institution a creditable college. Juarez Academy projects its future needs largely in the form of a new building which will offer gymnasium, shop and laboratory facilities



at an estimated cost of some \$40,000. If the Mexican schools are to be kept up to standard they will need more money for equipment and teachers with adequate training which will call for increased expenditures.

The expenditures involved in the consideration of all of these questions will of course be spread out over a period of eight or ten years. I call them to the attention of the Board at this time that they may be considered as a part of the issue which is now before us.

#### Our Present Status

The Church now operates the following schools: Brigham Young University, Brigham Young College, L.D.S. University, Weber College, Snow College, Ricks College, Dixie College, Gila College, Juarez Academy . . .

As already indicated we are now operating 59 seminaries, which to date are serving 9,231 students. The following figures indicate the relative total and per-capita costs as between the Church schools and the seminaries:

#### Schools and Seminaries For the Year 1924-25

	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Per Capita Cost</u>
1. Salaries . . . . .	\$486,918.50 . . . . .	\$121.94
2. Total Trustee-in-trust- Appropriation . . . . .	\$647,976.53 . . . . .	162.28
3. Total Maintenance, not including salaries and building equipment. . . . .	\$215,726.42 . . . . .	54.03
4. Total Building & Equip. . . . .	\$108,500.10 . . . . .	27.17
5. Grand Total. . . . .	\$818,426.01 . . . . .	204.97
	<u>Seminaries</u>	
1. Salaries . . . . .	\$121,987.58 . . . . .	14.65
2. Maintenance . . . . .	\$ 12,415.48 . . . . .	1.49
3. Building & Equipment . . . . .	\$ 63,099.53 . . . . .	7.58
4. Grand Total . . . . .	\$197,502.59 . . . . .	23.73



### Developments Ahead

For the present year, we have appropriated in round figures, \$736,000 of which amount \$555,500 is for schools (this amount is exclusive of building appropriations); \$140,000 is for seminaries; \$22,500 is for gymnasiums; and \$18,000 is for administration.

As we plan for the future three alternatives seem to suggest themselves:

1. That we hold the schools to present level of operation or perhaps even reduce slightly the amount appropriated to each school and extend the establishment of seminaries until we shall have served all of the senior high schools where Latter-day Saint children may well be served. If we maintain the schools which are now in operation, it is difficult to see how we can reduce the appropriation now being made for them.

From a survey which is now fairly complete, it looks as if we may look forward to establishing nine more seminaries in Utah, eight more in Idaho and three in Arizona and possibly two in Wyoming. These are of high school grade and will cost the Church annually practically \$52,000. In addition, there will in all probability be a call for the establishment of five collegiate seminaries, one in Salt Lake, one in Logan, one in Cedar City, one in Moscow, Idaho, one in Phoenix, Arizona, and one in Tucson, Arizona. Conservatively, these seminaries will likely involve an annual expenditure of \$25,000.

To carry forward the present program, therefore, and to provide adequately for all the seminary needs now in prospect will involve the Church in an annual expenditure, apart from a building program of slightly more than \$800,000.

2. The second plan of procedure is to extend the scope of our operations in keeping with the two applications at the beginning of this report and in keeping with the prospectus of developments set down immediately following these applications. To follow this second plan will clearly involve the Church in an annual expenditure exceeding \$1,000,000 over and above the building program.
3. The third plan open to us is to withdraw from the field of academic instruction altogether and center our educational efforts in a promotion of a strictly religious education program. This program could be financed at a cost greatly under the expenditure involved in our academic program.



Our plan of operation would then be to complement the work of the entire public school system wherever our people are effected by offering an adequate religious instruction. Such a change in policy of course involves certain very fundamental changes and would call for a careful consideration of each of our institutions now in operation. Should this last plan be looked upon with favor, I shall be glad to submit details with reference to the possibilities growing out of the conversion of each of the schools now in operation.

I call these problems to your attention now that we may think through fully our entire educational procedure. In the light of our available resources, in the light of all our needs social and otherwise, in the light of the historical evolution of our schools and the inevitable State expansion of schools with a consequent rivalry and competition in our junior college field, and in the light of our opportunity to render a distinctly unique contribution to the world-- in the light of all of these considerations, what ought our field to be?

Any modification of our present practice of course involves serious considerations with reference to (a) the plants now owned, (b) the teachers now in the service, and (c) the attitude of our people who have come to regard our Church Schools as of very great value.

These matters, serious as they may be, are matters always involved in the face of social progress. I call them to your attention only with a view to determining upon a policy which will best meet the educational needs of our people and at the same time help most effectively to meet all of our other needs.

Respectfully submitted,

February 3, 1926

Considerations:

1. Does the Church receive benefit in returns from an 8 to 1 investment in Church Schools as against Seminaries?
2. Do these returns equal the returns possible in other fields from the same investment?
3. Does there lie ahead in the field of the Junior College the same competition with State institutions that has been encountered in the high school field?
4. Can the Church afford to operate a university which will be able creditably to carry on as against the great and richly endowed universities of our land?



5. Will collegiate seminaries be successful?
6. Can seminaries be operated successfully in communities where Latter-day Saints do not predominate?
7. May Seminaries be legislated out of successful operation?
8. Assuming that the Church should continue to operate Church Schools, can it launch a permanent campaign for funds which will adequately provide for all academic needs? (Consider the Rexburg plan.)<sup>65</sup>

After the paper had been read and the considerations briefly considered, it was decided that these matters were of such vital importance, that every member should have time to personally consider them before taking them up for general discussion. Consequently, a month later, March 3, 1926, in the next Board meeting, President Nibley began the discussion by stating, "the whole question in a few words is: Shall the Church continue to compete with the State in education and duplicate the work being done by the State or shall it step out and attend strictly to religious education?"<sup>66</sup>

After each had expressed himself, in a lengthy meeting which produced no concrete decisions, "Rudger Clawson had previously moved that the matter be referred to a committee but now changed his motion to have it referred to Superintendent Bennion to make concrete recommendations

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<sup>65</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, February 3, 1926.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., March 3, 1926.

for the consideration of the Board. The motion was duly seconded and carried."<sup>67</sup>

In the next meeting, March 10, 1926, to which the principals of the various schools in question had been invited to attend,

President Grant stated the question to which the school heads should address themselves, as follows: He reported that the tithes of the church had not increased during the past several years while the demands of the church schools had more than doubled; that there were many other needs for which funds be appropriated, such as, for instance, the taking care of widows and dependent children in a constructive adequate way; so that, said he, "we have now come to a point where we feel that we cannot supply the needs of the church school system in its present form, and we have been discussing the question as to whether or not we should remodel our school system and perhaps confine ourselves almost exclusively to seminaries."

Each of the church school men present was asked to express himself fully with respect to this question.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, in the meeting held March 18, Superintendent Bennion submitted in writing his recommendations, as per instruction from the meeting of March 3. His considerations and recommendations follow in part:

#### Basic Considerations

1. The operation of our present system of schools and seminaries involves an outlay out of proportion to the total revenues of the Church.
2. If the present system is continued this outlay must be increased to meet the inevitable demand for more seminaries and the natural development of our schools.

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<sup>67</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, March 3, 1926.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., March 10, 1926.



3. Our history to date records a transition in which we have withdrawn from the elementary and the secondary school fields as the state has made ample provision to meet the need in these fields. There is every indication to point to a repetition of that history in the field of the Junior College.
4. The attempt to operate Junior Colleges will therefore involve us in competition with State schools and in the expenditures of capital which it will be difficult to realize upon.
5. Wherever successfully operated seminaries have succeeded admirable in the teaching of the gospel and have proved to be of inestimable value in the life of communities.
6. Educational institutions generally find it advantageous to have some more or less fixed basis, such as a mill or percentage, as a criterion for guidance in the drawing up of budgets.

#### Recommendations

1. General.
  - a. That we continue to establish seminaries wherever their need is keenly felt and wherever the local people exhibit a spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm which seems to guarantee for successful operation of such institutions.
  - b. That we plan to withdraw from the field of the Junior Colleges as the State may make provision to take them over, or where conditions no longer warrant their maintenance, except in those cases in which in our judgement such conversion will be inimical to the welfare to our young men and women.<sup>69</sup>

Superintendent Bennion then made specific recommendations relative to each existing institution, which were acted upon separately and individually. Part of this work was carried over to the next meeting, which was held on March 23. In that meeting Bennion expressed himself relative

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<sup>69</sup>Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, March 18, 1926.



to his personal philosophy concerning the future of L.D.S. education.

He said:

My judgement leads me to the conclusion that finally and inevitably we shall withdraw from the academic field and center upon religious education. It is only a question as to when we may best do that. These recommendations are compromise recommendations. I look forward to the time when we shall supplement the University of Utah with religious education under strong men and then I shall have no fears. In the main the men in the State universities are seeking the truth, and I think it somewhat a foolish idea to believe that they are wilfully perverting the truth.

One further thought: In the days when I needed help most that help did not come through any organization, but the two men who helped me most in the University of Utah were Milton Bennion and James E. Talmage. If we could have at the University of Utah a strong man who could draw students to him and whom they could consult personally and counsel with, such a man would be of infinite value. I am thinking of Moscow University in that same way.<sup>70</sup>

All Board Members expressed themselves freely, some agreeing with Bennion, some not. Finally President Nibley concluded the meeting by the following recommendation:

I think these meetings have been very profitable. I know that the heart of every one here is for the interest of this Church. There is no selfish interest involved, but we have accomplished very little, although the discussion that has been going on for several days has been good. We may continue our schools as they are or we may cut off the dog's tail an inch at a time, but in so doing you do not get rid of the dog. I suggest therefore that this matter be submitted to the First Presidency and the Superintendent, for them to take the suggestions that have been made here and give consideration to them and to the amount of money the Church is likely to have, and see what can be done. It is easier to formulate some policy with three or four than with twenty. Let us form some definite policy and work to that end. If it is to go on and continue to

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., March 23, 1926.



compete with the State schools, why let us go ahead, but the main thing is to get some definite policy for the future. I make my suggestion as a motion.

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.<sup>71</sup>

Although no formal mention is made further in the minutes, it seems evident that the decision reached by Bennion and the First Presidency was that of adopting Bennion's recommendation to withdraw from secular education altogether. Certainly President Grant was not in favor of spending large sums of money on education. In the midst of these foregoing discussions he had expressed himself thusly:

I am free to confess that nothing has worried me more since I became president than the expansion of the appropriation for the Church School system. With the idea of cutting down the expense, we appointed three of the Apostles as Commissioners; but instead of cutting down we have increased and increased, until we decided a year ago that there should be no further increase. We decided to limit Brigham Young University to \$200,000. Last year that school got \$165,000 extra for a new building, and inside of two or three years they expect a regular appropriation of \$300,000, besides which they have plans laid out for new buildings involving an expenditure of over a million, if not a million and a half. Well, we can't do it, that's all.<sup>72</sup>

Further evidence that Bennion's recommendation was accepted as Church policy is found in the instructions to Dr. Joseph F. Merrill, who succeeded Bennion in 1928. He was told

. . . that the policy of the Church was to eliminate church schools as fast as circumstances would permit. The minutes of the General Church Board of Education for the next 5½ years of his administration show he faithfully tried to carry out these instructions which he had received from President Heber J. Grant. In doing so, he met frequently with state educational officers, state legislators, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, all towards the goal of having the State of Utah assume the full responsibility for education at all levels formerly assumed by the L.D.S.

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid.    <sup>72</sup>Ibid., February 3, 1926.

Church, including higher education. This would leave the church free to concentrate its entire educational budget on religious education.<sup>73</sup>

And at a farewell testimonial meeting held in Merrill's honor in August of 1933, President Ivins, representing President Grant, applauded Merrill's work in following through on that policy.<sup>74</sup>

However, he was not totally successful in his efforts since some of the schools never were disposed of, but are still in operation. These include Brigham Young University, in Provo, Utah, L.D.S. High School in Salt Lake City, which was later converted to the L.D.S. Business College, and Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, just prior to his resignation in February, 1928, Bennion submitted to the Board a document entitled "A Brief Summary of the Historical Background, the Present Status, and the Possible Future Development of the Latter-day Saint Educational System."<sup>76</sup> This document was left for "the information and consideration of the Board in the light of his administration and the needs of the system, as he sees them for the future."<sup>77</sup> It is interesting to note how many of the recommendations were made policy.

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<sup>73</sup>James R. Clark, op. cit., p. 324.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>75</sup>Hartshorn, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>76</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>77</sup>Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, February 1, 1928.



The Beginning Of Institute

One of the rather interesting developments arising out of the discussions concerning the policy of 1926 was Bennion's solution to providing religious education for college students. Even though his proposal was to eliminate the Church Schools altogether and sell or give them to the states involved, thus relieving the Church of the responsibility for secular education, still he was not without a plan to provide the religious education needs for these students. As has already been mentioned in the proceedings of the Board meeting of March 23, 1926, he therein proposed that each university be supplemented with religious education under the able leadership of strong men. He felt that one of the main duties of these able leaders would be to draw students to them for personal consultation and counsel. In fact, he cited as a precedent, his own experience at the University of Utah, wherein James E. Talmage and Milton Bennion had assisted him greatly.<sup>78</sup>

Of course, such a proposal was but a logical extension of the already successful seminary program, but it none-the-less marked the beginning of a new Church-wide program of religious education on the collegiate level. The first of these "collegiate seminaries" (as they were then known, but have since become and are presently known as Institutes of Religion) was established adjacent the University of Idaho at Moscow. On October 12, 1926, Superintendent Bennion recommended to the

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., March 23, 1926.

Board

that J. Wyley Sessions be employed to look after the religious interests of the students there . . . and that during the year he make a careful study of the situation to ascertain what is the best thing to do by way of establishing a permanent seminary. This recommendation was approved.<sup>79</sup>

Sessions, writing later of his experience in getting established, said,

The faculty of the University of Idaho specified conditions and standards under which the State Institutions could cooperate and grant credit for college courses in religious philosophy and Bible history given in schools of religion maintained by the various Christian denominations. The faculty recommendations were approved by the State Board of Education and are as follows:

Conditions:

1. That courses in religious education submitted for credit in the University of Idaho shall be offered in Moscow by an incorporated organization which assumes full responsibility for the selection of its instructors and the maintenance of its work in a physical plant adequate for instruction of University grade.
2. That courses offered for University credit shall at all times conform to the following constitutional provision under which the University of Idaho operates: "No instruction either sectarian in religion or partisan in politics shall ever be allowed in any department of the University."
3. That University elective credit of not to exceed eight semester hours may be allowed for such courses.
4. That students desiring credit for such courses shall secure the consent of the dean of their college at the time of registration and that the number of credits for which they

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., October 12, 1926.



are registered be reduced so that the total number of credits taken, including those in religious education, shall conform to the University standards.

5. That credit for these courses be granted only upon the recommendation of the Committee on Advanced Standing.

Standards:

1. The instructor shall have a master's degree or its equivalent and shall possess such maturity of scholarship as is required for appointment to the position of full professor in the University of Idaho.
2. The courses offered shall conform to University standards in library requirements and in method and rigor of their conduct.
3. None but students enrolled in the University shall be admitted to these courses, or such other students as are rated by the Registrar of the University as entitled to University standing.
4. Classes in religious education shall conform to the University calendar and to University standards as to length of period.
5. Approval of courses in religious education shall not be granted until they are adequately financed and there is a likelihood of their permanency.
6. Approval of such courses shall be continued to foundations maintaining at least one instructor devoting not less than half time to such work.
7. The University reserves the right to assure itself from time to time that these conditions and standards are being met.<sup>80</sup>

Although these same conditions may not be identical with every college or university, it has become standard Church procedure to attempt

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<sup>80</sup>J. Wyley Sessions, "The Latter-day Saint Institutes," The Improvement Era, Vol. XXXVIII (July, 1935), pp. 412-13.

to meet the requirements and conditions of all universities and colleges where Institutes have been established.

In 1934, when the Institute at the University of Utah opened, the General Church Board announced the objectives for the establishing of Institutes. They are as follows.

1. To discuss with students, freely and frankly, individually and in groups, questions of their religious thinking and problems pertaining to their philosophy of life.
2. To broaden their understanding of life by acquainting them with the great role that religion and religious leaders have played in the formation of our civilization.
3. To increase their knowledge and appreciation of the position of Mormonism in the religious thought of the world, thereby to strengthen their belief in the truth of the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.
4. To offer them pleasant social contacts and stimulating recreational activity; to be a social center for L.D.S. students, especially out-of-town students.<sup>81</sup>

And from that beginning in 1926, until the present day, these objectives have remained fairly consistent. The Church now operates some 228 Institutes, with an enrollment of 38,751 college students. These Institutes are spread over thirty-four of the states and in three foreign countries.<sup>82</sup>

#### Bennion's Resignation

On December 15, 1927, at a meeting of the Ogden Kiwanis Club, where Superintendent Bennion was a guest speaker, he announced his intention of leaving the Church school system, when he said "this will probably

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<sup>81</sup>Meservy, op. cit., p. 320.

<sup>82</sup>Seminaries and Institutes of the Church, 1967-68 Bulletin.



be the last time I shall appear before you in my present position. It is only a few months when I shall leave the Church school service, and be a man of the business world."<sup>83</sup>

What his exact reasons were for such a move may forever be a mystery. In light of his success as an able administrator and the success of his personally promoted policies, certainly the question "why" is a logical one. Some who were close to him have suggested that the conservative attitude held by the Church leaders under whom he served was the big reason.<sup>84</sup> However, this writer has been unable to document any such feeling or attitude. To the contrary, both in his statements to the press,<sup>85</sup> and his official letter of resignation to the Board, only the best of feelings were expressed. To the Board he said:

Dear Brethren:

For nine years it has been my privilege to be associated with you as Superintendent of Church Schools. During that time you have shown me every courtesy and extended to me your fullest confidence and support. As I have come to know you better, I have come to love and honor you the more. I appreciate the blessing which has attached to being permitted to enjoy your friendship.

Now that an opening has presented itself such that I feel to avail myself of its opportunities, I tender my resignation, appreciative beyond my ability to express, of your many kindnesses.

May the Lord continue to sustain you, and may He bless me that I

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<sup>83</sup>Journal History (December 15, 1927).

<sup>84</sup>Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>85</sup>News item in the Deseret News, December 28, 1927.

may worthily represent you and our Church wherever I shall be associated.

Sincerely your brother,

Adam S. Bennion<sup>86</sup>

It is interesting to note that following his resignation as Superintendent he was asked to continue as a member of the Board,<sup>87</sup> a position he accepted and held for the rest of his life. One other interesting sidelight is also worthy of mention. President Grant was a senior member of the board of directors of the Utah Power and Light Company, the firm to which Bennion was to be next employed.<sup>88</sup>

And so, for whatever reason, on February 1, 1928, Dr. Joseph F. Merrill succeeded Bennion as Superintendent of L.D.S. education. It marked the end of an era of unprecedented change in L.D.S. educational policy and philosophy. In only nine short years Bennion had contributed much toward a progressive, expanding system, much of which is still in effect today. His lasting contributions will be treated in the last chapter.

According to Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, "there was a widespread feeling of disappointment when he quit and went to Utah Power and Light."<sup>89</sup> And Obert C. Tanner echoed this feeling when he said, "he had such a powerful leadership that when he announced his resignation I lost my appetite. I was discouraged; felt like a rudderless ship."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Minutes of the meeting of the General Church Board, February 1, 1928. <sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>89</sup>Interview with Sidney B. Sperry, Professor of religion, Brigham Young University, February 19, 1969

<sup>90</sup>Interview with Obert C. Tanner, February 4, 1969.



### Summary

The year 1919 marked the beginning of a new era in L.D.S. educational organization and policy. With the appointment of David O. McKay, Stephen L. Richards, and Richard R. Lyman as Commissioners of Education for the Church, and Adam S. Bennion as Superintendent, the basic organizational structure was formed. It was Bennion's assignment to administer the affairs of education under the supervision of the Commission, whose duties were largely executive in nature. Both the Commission and Superintendent were subject to the L.D.S. Church General Board of Education, presided over by the First Presidency of the Church.

As Superintendent, one of Bennion's initial duties was to suggest policy for the Board's consideration. With the progressive attitude which he possessed, he was continually making proposals to the Board relative to new policy. Two of the most notable of these were submitted on March 3, 1920, and on February 3, 1926. Although different in scope and range, these two policies were very similar, both calling for the Church's withdrawal from the field of secular education in favor of a more concentrated effort in religious education. The policy of 1920 brought about the end of secular public school education while religious training thus became Church policy. This was effected by the establishment of seminaries adjacent to the public schools, a program to which Bennion devoted much of his entire energy in the remaining years of his administration.

The policy of 1926 was a mere extension of the 1920 policy, calling for the Church withdrawal from secular education on the college

level. The seminaries had proven so successful and popular and the Church budget for education was so limited, that Bennion proposed a complete withdrawal from secular education, again suggesting that the state assume this responsibility as it had done on the secondary level. His plan was to extend the seminaries to the college level under the able leadership of selected and trained men. Thus the college student would not be without religious education. Both of these recommendations became policy, and have had a far-reaching effect, with seminary on the secondary level presently operating in forty-nine of the states, and Institute on the college level being extended to some 228 college campuses.

Much of his work as Superintendent revolved around the selection and training of the seminary teachers, as well as building courses of study to be used in the seminaries. To accomplish these ends he inaugurated the summer training workshops for the seminary teachers. There the teachers were given theological training by the Church leaders, instructed in educational methods, and assigned responsibilities in developing outlines for the various courses. Although these summer workshops were discontinued for a time following his administration, they have been reinstated by the present administrator, William E. Berrett, who as a young teacher in the Bennion administration learned of their value and worth.

Although his programs flourished and he was loved and respected by both his superiors and teachers, in February of 1928 he resigned his position to take an administrative job with Utah Power and Light Company. Thus marked the end of one phase of a remarkable educational career, and the end of an era of much far-reaching educational policy for the Church.



## CHAPTER V

### HIS PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

#### Philosophical Influences On Bennion

Here in the shadow of these everlasting hills I bring you no argument--I bring you a conviction. A conviction that we and the world in which we live are the product not of chance--not of the mere interplay of lines of force--but the master work of a great Creator. A conviction that we are the children of our Father in Heaven, who created the universe and all of us, and that He still guides our destinies.<sup>1</sup>

In a way, the foregoing, offered by Bennion in his famous University of Utah baccalaureate address in 1950, serves as a basis for evaluating his philosophy. It represents so much of all that was typical concerning his belief about God and man. It is so typically Mormon in doctrine. But then, as has already been mentioned, Bennion was not only a Mormon, but a devout Mormon, and being such, certainly held much in common with those Mormon leaders who shaped Mormon educational philosophy.

Like all practicing Mormons, he too believed that "the glory of God is intelligence,"<sup>2</sup> thus placing educational pursuit in the "must" category. He likewise shared with his predecessors and contemporaries the view that both religious and secular education were essential; that if a man were to find happiness in either this life or the next, his days

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<sup>1</sup>Adam S. Bennion, The Candle of the Lord (Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1958), pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup>Doctrine and Covenants, 93:36.

in this life must be filled with a never-ending quest for knowledge and truth. On one occasion, he said, "with Latter-day Saints, education is a vitally religious consideration. To them this world is a great training school out of which man is graduated into an eternity of progress and development . . . man, a son of God, achieves his divinity through enlightened experience--an experience in which education is a foundation principle."<sup>3</sup> His entire life was a personification of that philosophy, not only in his personal achievements as a scholar, but also in his constant encouraging admonitions to the youth of the Church.

But, as he had influenced so many by the magnetism of his personality, so he also had been influenced by those under whom he studied. He stated that in his tender years, in the years when philosophy was being formed, that two men stood out in his memory as having influenced his thinking a great deal.<sup>4</sup> Those two, Professor Milton Bennion and Dr. James E. Talmage, were both prominent educators at the University of Utah when he was a student there. Since they no doubt played an important role in the shaping of his philosophy, it may be well to examine some of their philosophy.

Milton Bennion was a nationally recognized teacher and leader in the field of character education; a field, interestingly enough, that Adam Bennion devoted much of his time and attention to both as a teacher and administrator. On one occasion Milton Bennion stated:

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<sup>3</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "The Latter-day Saints And Education," The Improvement Era, Vol. XXIII (July 1920), p. 774.

<sup>4</sup>Minutes of the meeting of General Church Board, March 23, 1926.



We cannot succeed in teaching by simply knowing the thing we are going to teach. We must know the persons to be taught, learn all we can about them, through the study of books or the investigations of specialists in various lines; but we can never succeed if we stop there. We must ourselves make first-hand study of human nature, and especially of the nature of children and young people. We must associate with them, have sympathy with them, try to get their point of view, how they understand things and what will appeal to them, and through this sympathetic understanding, find ways of influencing them.<sup>5</sup>

Adam Bennion also had similar views on that same subject. He said:

I am tempted to draw from the example of the greatest teachers I have known--men who appealed to and left their touch upon even the most frivolous among their students--certain inferences which may be valid for college teaching, perhaps for all teaching. They have by no means been themselves cast in the same mould, but they seem to me to have certain things in common. Each of them was a companion of youth, not in their work alone, but now and then in their play also. Each of them was what I venture to call a high priest of learning. Each of them gave the impression, not unctuously, but simply and unconsciously, of "being about his Father's business." Each felt and made others feel that he was breaking the bread of life. And--what is no less important--each assumed by his attitude and bearing that his students were hungry for that bread. None of them was the author, or could have been the author, of that notorious classroom quip: "Gentlemen, if you will be patient a few moments longer, I still have a few pearls to cast."

Knowledge of one's subject, not only in itself but in its relationships, and reverence for that knowledge as an instrument of freedom; knowledge of one's students and reverence for what they have it in them to become--are not these the prime requisities of a pedagogy which may enlist the partnership of our students with us in the common business of education?<sup>6</sup>

Milton Bennion once wrote the following on teaching as an occupation:

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<sup>5</sup>Milton Bennion, "Personal Preparation of A Sunday School Teacher," The Instructor, Vol. VIII (January 1923), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Manuscripts, Folder 1496.



A vocation that has no rewards other than financial is not worth choosing. Money is valuable only as a means of exchange and there are things of great value that money cannot buy. Teaching offers among its rewards some of these non-purchasable values; e.g., the pleasure of association with aspiring minds, buoyant with faith and optimism; daily work that keeps one in constant touch with the highest ideals of the race as expressed in history and literature, arts and sciences, philosophy and religion. From these sources the teacher draws the materials of classroom instruction. More important still are the opportunities for exercise of personal influence on minds yet plastic and responsive to ideals. The teacher with strong well-developed "teaching personality" has one of the greatest opportunities in the world to count for something in determining future destinies. The exercise of this influence frequently leads to establishment of personal relationships that are made possible in no other way. These are some of the real satisfactions of life, which the sordidly rich ultimately crave in vain.<sup>7</sup>

The preface of Adam Bennion's book "Fundamental Problems In Teaching Religion," which follows, so resembles the above statement, that it would almost appear that Milton Bennion wrote it, emphasizing the influence which he had upon Adam Bennion's philosophy.

The successful teacher ever views his calling as an opportunity--not as an obligation. To associate with young people is a rare privilege; to teach them is an inspiration; to lead them into the glorious truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is heavenly joy itself. This little volume hopes to push open the door of opportunity a little wider, that more of that joy may be realized.<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Talmage, a most brilliant scientist and later apostle of the Church, also had a great influence on Bennion, as evidenced in the following excerpts; first from Dr. Talmage, and then from Bennion's own similar philosophy.

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<sup>7</sup>Milton Bennion, "Teaching As A Vocation," The Improvement Era, Vol. XXIII (July, 1920), p. 814.

<sup>8</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Fundamental Problems In Teaching Religion, The General Boards of the Auxiliary Organizations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Scoville Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1921, Preface.



A pleasing characteristic of modern education--the education of which you are the privileged partakers, the education of which I doubt not you will be worthy exemplars--is that it recognizes the sanctity of labor and the dignity of work. . . .

The lazy man is out of harmony, out of place, and forever out of sorts, in the world of today. He is the grumbler, the sufferer, the pessimist, to whom a day of sunshine is but a saddening prophecy and a dread assurance of clouds and storm to come. . . . I would there were a law requiring that the yellow flag of quarantine should be attached to every lazy man, so that others might be warned against too close an approach. Like the leper, he is unclean, and should be so regarded wherever he is met.<sup>9</sup>

How many young fellows are in love with the grind of the task assigned--how many girls thrill in anticipation of the nightly dish pan salute!

And yet the story of achievement links about the men and women who have loved to work. No mere holder of a job has stirred the world with his contribution. A man helpful to his fellows must be helpful.<sup>10</sup>

And again: "The thing which keeps most men small is the Habit of Looking for Easy Things. The obverse of that statement is equally true. The regular mastery of difficult tasks is the thing which builds strong men and women."<sup>11</sup> And still again, on the sweetness of adversity and hardship:

Yes, Hardship is the one boat that rides the mellow sea of happiness of the soul. Anxious waiting at the bedside of loved ones--desperate struggling against the odds of circumstances--putting our

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<sup>9</sup>James E. Talmage, "University of Utah Commencement address" April 7, 1911, Improvement Era, Vol. XIV, p. 728.

<sup>10</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "The Ships of Life," The Juvenile Instructor, Vol. LVII (January 1922), p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Letter to students of L.D.S. Business College, dated December 13, 1935, Located in Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1594.

all on the alter of sacrifice--these after all are the experiences that open the human soul. And the windows once opened let in the richest blessings of heaven.

We do homage to Washington, not because of Mt. Vernon, but because of Valley Forge. We honor Lincoln not for his wit but for his struggle for the principles of American liberty; the world worships at the shrine of the Master not because of Nazareth of Bethlehem, but because of Calvary. The glory that attaches to motherhood is born in the valley of the shadow.<sup>12</sup>

But even as there were many who had influenced Bennion's thinking, and had inspired and encouraged him to aspire, it should be said that through his constant pursuit and careful analysis, his own philosophy of religious education was born. It is a philosophy rich in wisdom, that all educators could with profit consider and examine.

Since the philosophy is somewhat complex, an attempt has been made in this study to divide the following selected excerpts from his writings and speeches into various categories:

### Education Defined

In a word, there can be no education unless there is change--and that education is best which secures the greatest change for the better in the conduct of the individual in his promotion of the social welfare of mankind in the interest of a greater succeeding generation.

Too often education is confused either with the securing or with the importing of knowledge. Facts are important--they are the "stuff out of which conclusions should be made" but they are not the sum total of education. Literally the word means "to lead out." One becomes educated as he is "led out" into ever enlarging circles of usefulness.

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<sup>12</sup> Bennion, "The Ships of Life, op. cit., p. 5.



Education involves the three factors: knowledge, ideals or attitudes, and habits. To grow adequately, a person must project an ideal and crystalize an attitude toward it and all life besides--he must secure knowledge as a guide and a tool toward the realization of the Ideal--but of even greater importance he must find himself habituated in doing what will cultivate his power to become what he has projected. Worthy education must build for character through the medium of these three factors.<sup>13</sup>

I am at a loss to know fully what education is. Can you define it? There are those people who have mistaken it for the acquisition of knowledge, for becoming a trained technician in some line of endeavor--some critics insist that a man is not educated unless he has at least forgotten Greek and Latin . . .

Education, as I understand it, literally means to lead out--in all of one's power to do . . . Education is not necessarily locked up in school rooms, and it may be acquired in any avenue of life.<sup>14</sup>

The chief end of education is to develop man into the image of God. To make ourselves a credit to our Maker, which many of us are not, and to fit ourselves to live the kind of life and enjoy the kind of pleasures which a child of God ought to live and enjoy.<sup>15</sup>

Education of course is a life-long process. Schooling is only one part of an education and yet schooling is important for boys and girls because in the first place school is the great reservoir of civilization and it is our best means to date to pass on the heritage of the race; and in the second place because it deals with youth in their plastic years and sets up habits and ideals which are to be of tremendous value throughout their lives. If it were possible to lead boys and girls to see school as a great game of life into which they could enter with the enthusiasm of other games,--that teachers, parents and all others interested in the game are anxious only to have these boys and girls play the game well--if it were possible to

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<sup>13</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "What Education Is And Should Do," Deseret News (September 5, 1925), p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "Speech to State Bankers Association," Provo, Utah, date unknown. Taken from Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 779.

<sup>15</sup>Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 329.



from the hurry of life into the quiet of a holy meditation, to renew our covenants, review our lives, and pledge ourselves to a new tomorrow.<sup>20</sup>

When man experiences God he is religious regardless of what circumstances he finds himself in.<sup>21</sup>

I am impressed with the thought that I may be trained physically, I may exercise the muscles and bodily functions given to men, I may become an athlete, a puglist, what I will, and my spirit left wholly in the background; and yet . . . I am convinced that the spirit of man permeates all of his other powers, and represents really the divinity that is in him. I was struck within the week with reading an address--if you share your material possessions, you divide them; if you share your spiritual possessions, you multiply them. If you divide a pie you have less than before you divided it, but if you share a smile you have more smile than when you started; if you share a story, or a good deed, if you share anything spiritual, your very sharing adds to it.<sup>22</sup>

### Music In Religion

I have always been grateful, my brethren and sisters, that provision has been made for music in our worship. Its refining and sustaining influence is one of the most potent factors in life. I am happy in the inspiration which led the leaders of our Church, in those early, far-off days, when they builded this edifice, to make provision, out of their scant earnings, for one of the great organs of the world, and set as an ideal one of the outstanding choirs in the world. It is good to come here and meditate under the influence of their music.<sup>23</sup>

The man who has never joined whole-heartedly into the singing of a rousing anthem or who has not partaken of the quiet charm of a sacred hymn--that man has never fully caught the power of religious

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<sup>20</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Talk in Salt Lake Tabernacle, January 14, 1934, Deseret News Church Section, January 20, 1934.

<sup>21</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Talk in Salt Lake Tabernacle, October 16, 1927, Journal History (October 16, 1927).

<sup>22</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "Spiritual Education," Relief Society Magazine, January, 1925, p. 14.

<sup>23</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Talk in Salt Lake Tabernacle, January 14, 1934, Deseret News Church Section, January 20, 1934.



feeling. Music is the great accompaniment to life and sacred music is the refiner of the soul. Listened to or participated in, music does something for men which no other agency can do. Thought turned loose upon a wonderful melody or interwoven with sacred harmonies is led to some of his finest heights. It is inconceivable that man could listen understandably to our noblest hymns and not be moved. The appreciation of worthy music is always a creative experience.<sup>24</sup>

No doubt this feeling which he had for music was instrumental in the development of what is known as the "devotional" in the seminary class. A portion of the class period is given over to the singing of hymns for the purpose of awakening a spiritual response.

#### Teaching Religion--An Artful Profession

Teaching will be a profession when we have learned the need of thorough scholarly equipment and single-minded devotion to our daily and hourly duties in the school room.<sup>25</sup>

Is your work under the calling of a teacher to be but a job, or will you elevate it into a profession?--make of it an art?

Does the task assigned you appear to be a burden--an obligation--or can you see in it a wonderful opportunity?

For what will you be remembered when your teaching shall have been done?

At the outset, these questions deserve your careful consideration. The destinies of human souls are in part to be determined by what you may do or fail to do.<sup>26</sup>

Religious teaching really involves situations in which teacher-pupil groups go into conferences about life and its problems. In order that those conferences may be made most meaningful, experience

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<sup>24</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Religion As Creative Experience," The Improvement Era, Vol. XXXVI (April, 1933), p. 325.

<sup>25</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 206.

<sup>26</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "Principles of Teaching," The Juvenile Instructor, Vol. LXIII (September, 1928), p. 497.



has shown that four factors should be systematically fitted into the teaching process: (1) Subject Matter; (2) Teaching Techniques; (3) Pupil Responses; (4) The Personal Influence of the Teacher.

Subject Matter: Courses of study systematize materials and life experiences. Of course, teacher and pupils could get together and discuss current topics and immediate problems, but a course of study guarantees an orderly and comprehensive approach to life's unfolding developments.

✓ Teaching Techniques: Teaching is an art--the greatest of the arts--and rests upon carefully worked out principles. There are better ways of presenting material; of asking questions; of stimulating discussions; of making forceful applications; of arousing interest; of inspiring to higher ideals.

Pupil Response: The real test of teaching is what it comes to mean in the lives of pupils. Teaching ever must center in pupil response. The alert teacher is always mindful of the pupil: How he listens; How he participates; How he reaches conclusions; How he lives.

Personal Influence: Personal influence is inherent in everything a teacher does and is. It is not theoretical abstraction--it does not exist in a vacuum. Because of what you are, what you know, what you feel, what you do, you will exert influence upon the lives of your pupils.<sup>27</sup>

Teaching is a sacred calling. Men and women who give their lives to teaching consecrate themselves in a unique way to the higher ideals of life.<sup>28</sup>

Teaching does not merely consist of an inquisition of questions with appropriate answers thrown in; it surely is not mere reading; nor can it be mistaken for preaching or lecturing. These are all means that may be employed in the process of teaching. And they are important too . . . but we have discovered that you cannot teach boys

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✓ <sup>27</sup> Adam S. Bennion, "The Power of Personality In Teaching," Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 350.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



and girls nothing. They can no more be happy listening to nothing than they can be content doing nothing.

And so we now urge the significance of having a rich supply of subject matter--a substantial content of lesson material. But the doctrine holds that the teacher ought not to lose himself in mere facts--they are merely the medium through which he arrives at and drives home the truth. . . . We have said that teaching is a complex art. It consists of at least eight fundamentals, each one of which, or any combination of which, may be featured in any one particular lesson: (1) Presentation of Facts; (2) Organization and evaluation of knowledge; (3) Interpretation and elaboration of truth; (4) Inspiration to higher ideals; (5) Encouragement and direction given to expression; (6) Discovery of pupils' better selves; (7) Inspiration of example as well as precept; (8) Application of truths taught in lives of pupils.<sup>29</sup>

### Counsel To Students

All of his adult life Bennion was a friend to youth. As teacher, administrator, apostle, even as businessman, the topic of many of his speeches were either giving counsel to or talking to other groups about the needs of youth. He was a favorite commencement speaker, accepting that assignment at many colleges and universities, as well as high school graduations. Certainly he was beloved of the students at the Church institutions. The following, from the B.Y.U. yearbook during the last year of his administration, expresses the esteem the youth held for him.

The Brigham Young University student body has a profound respect and admiration for Superintendent Adam S. Bennion. His genial personality, his sympathy with student problems, his helpful attitude, and his high ideals make him a valuable friend and wise counsellor. His visits to the school are awaited with expectancy and received

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<sup>29</sup>Bennion, Fundamental Problems of Teaching Religion, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

with enthusiasm. Contact with Superintendent Bennion is a source of inspiration and stimulation.<sup>30</sup>

Following then, are some excerpts from his counsel to the youth of the Church.

Youth, the one gift which all too soon will not be yours. Youth--given you that you may be happy and grow--your spring-time of life. May I suggest that your summer and autumn will find you harvesting the fruits of your spring plantings . . .

In this gift the students of America are rich beyond compare. With youth and health, only native endowment and effort can set limits to your possibilities. A college education is yours for the asking. May I be pardoned if I offer four suggestions:

1. Plan liberally now so that you will not be cramped and hedged in when more sober purposes may come to motivate your later life.
2. Underwrite your independence by fitting yourself to do eminently well at least one thing which will command adequate returns in the markets of the world.
3. Cultivate such an appreciation of the fine arts as will guarantee a constant interplay of beauty in your life's activities.
4. Discover the real function of religion in your life as a means of ascertaining the fuller and more ultimate values in human experience.<sup>31</sup>

Twenty years ago I did my first professional teaching at the L.D.S. For a score of years I have watched classes come and go and now I join with those going out in 1928 - a sort of long-distance graduation. For more than a score of years I have been traveling the highway of life which you are to follow after having been "oiled, greased and gassed" at the Service Station Commencement. Among your many kindnesses to me you have now extended the privilege of hinting a log for your route just ahead.

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<sup>30</sup>Brigham Young University, Banyan, 1927.

<sup>31</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Speech to Jordan High Seminary Graduates, May, 1925, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1269.



If you turn right, you will find yourself on a delightful, short, boulevard, College Avenue. Except for valve in head adjustments and occasional professorial punctures, this should be a most fascinating drive. It is really advisable not to run with the cut-out open.

Should any of you decide to turn left look out for blind alleys and lanes having no connection later with a main thoroughfare.

Beyond College Avenue you will encounter a great forking of the ways. Make full inquiry of tourists who have already tried them out. Guide posts of experience may save you needless miles of "off road."

Having hit upon "your highway" keep to it. Beware of short cuts. They are quite sure not to be turnpiked and a washout or a blowout may throw you seriously out of your schedule. Detours are usually rough going and are particularly poor for joy riding.

You will find matrimonial garages all along the way. Sooner or later you'll surely want to drop in one. But be sure the "overhauling" is completely and carefully done. If it is, the rest of your trip will be delightfully happy--if not, you may rattle into wreckage over mighty rough meandering.

There will be hills ahead, of course--some steep grades--but a shift into "low" and a vigorous "stepping on it" will carry you over.

Naturally, you will be mindful of the details of upkeep. See that the idea tank is comfortably filled--no one ever yet got any place without intellectual gas; see that the tires are well inflated--optimism is your best insurance against running on the rims; see that you have plenty of the oil of human kindness, together with your alemite of sympathy; check to see that your radiator is full of the water of patience to keep the engine from overheating.

Make sure that your headlight of faith is throwing a full gleam ahead; and, O yes, see that your mind shield doesn't get smeared from "mud slinging"--

Now--Step on It--And a wonderful trip ahead!<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Adam S. Bennion, L.D.S. High School Commencement Address, 1928, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1594.



I wish I could say it to you fine young people. You are having quite a tussle to get the first degree, I know it, and you want to get out, and you want to go to work. If I can say anything that is worth your while, you will never put an extra year into your training but that you will draw dividends on it all the rest of your life. Do not be in a hurry; you are going to be out working the rest of your lives. While you have this opportunity, capitalize it. . . .

The price you are going to pay for leadership, you fine young men and women, is long days and some sleepless nights, and if you do not want to indulge in those terms, you had better not shop in this market. No great leader ever became great on eight hours. Now, I beg of you to remember that there is no eight-hour day for leaders.<sup>33</sup>

It is wonderful to appreciate the "Y" of you; it is stirring to get the "Y" of yesterday and the traditions of a great institution, but primarily I hope you will take from this morning the "Y" of the Yearning for Learning. When I talk about yearning I mean to have that kind of anxiety of soul that leaves you unsettled and unhappy until you have anchored yourself in the facts that give you the satisfaction. I remember the fourth of the great Beatitudes, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst."<sup>34</sup>

Students of the Brigham Young University, here is the chance for gaining knowledge. Drink of it I beg of you. In these years that are choice, drink of it. Here in the companionship of friends you can say what you want. Drink long enough by staying here with them.

God gave me hills to climb and the strength to climb them that I might reach the heights. Not the heights of Mt. Timpanogas, but the heights of my own soul.<sup>35</sup>

As the above attests, his main plea to the youth was that of diligent scholarship. However, he was broad enough to realize the importance

<sup>33</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "The Price You Pay For Leadership," Speech given at BYU, May 4, 1955, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1830

<sup>34</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "The 'Y' In You" (speech given at BYU, March 29, 1955, BYU Speeches of The Year, 1955).

<sup>35</sup>Adam S. Bennion, BYU Devotional Speech, September 27, 1927, The "Y" News, September 27, 1927.



of recreation too, which is evidenced by his counsel to the BYU student body in 1925, when he said:

You need more than an exposure to take education, but don't imagine that it is the only thing. Take all you can, but reserve a little time regularly in which to do the thing you'd like to do. Your college is a mistake if you don't do something you don't have to do.<sup>36</sup>

He also recognized the need for great versatility in an age when specialization seemed to be predominant philosophy. To pharmaceutical students he counselled:

If I were talking to my own boy, I think I would say, "Son, were I in your place, I think I'd equip myself for a part to play in this world of affairs." I shouldn't like to be pushed off in some laboratory corner. I'm mindful of the importance of technical training--the techniques--the perfected techniques that make men strong. But I'd like to be a part of the stream of this great democratic society--so that along with the technical training, I'm here tonight to make a plea that I would make for my own boy. A plea which has made my own life so much richer than it ever could have been otherwise, has paid dividends beyond anything I can picture for you. I'm offering you six suggestions. I'd lead a boy going into pharmacy into six fields. He has to go into all six if he's going to measure up under the kind of definition I have for this man of today.

First of all I'd take him into the fields of history. . . .

The second field I'd take him into is sociology. . . .

Third, economics. . . .

Fourth, psychology. . . .

Fifth, literature. . . .

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<sup>36</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Lecture at BYU, The "Y" News, March 18, 1925.

Sixth, speech and English-learning to speak well the language we communicate with.<sup>37</sup>

### Counsel To Teachers

Since his great interest in life was the youth of the Church, he was naturally concerned about him, whose influence on youth was most significant - the teacher. Consequently, much of his life was devoted to counselling teachers, both by the spoken word and his gifted pen. Following are excerpts to teachers from both.

The first great question that should concern the Latter-day Saint teacher is "Why do I Teach?" To appreciate fully the real purposes behind teaching is the first great guarantee of success. For teaching is "no mere job"--it is a sacred calling. . . . Why do I teach?

The answer to this question is to be found, in part at least, in three-fold objectives of our Church. First the salvation and exaltation of the individual soul. As already pointed out, this is the very "work and glory" of the Father. Man is born into the world a child of divinity--born for the purpose of development and perfection. Life is the great laboratory in which he works out his experiment of eternity. In potentiality, a God--in actuality, a creature of heredity, environment, and teaching. "Why do I teach?" To help someone else realize his divinity--to assist him to become all that he might become--to make of him what he might not be but for my teaching.

A second answer to this query lies in our obligation to pass on the wonderful heritage which we here received from our pioneer forefathers. The story of their sacrifice, devotion, and achievement is unique in the history of the world. . . .

Nor is it enough that we strive to perfect the individual membership of the Church and preserve the social heritage out of the past --we assume to become the teachers of the world. It is our blessing to belong to a Church builded upon revelation--a Church established

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<sup>37</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Annual Pharmacy Lectures, Ann Arbor, Michigan, October 29, 1953, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1469.



and taught of the Lord. But with that blessing comes the injunction to carry the gospel to every nation and clime . . . Only he who is well taught may become a good teacher--hence the need of intelligent, devoted service.<sup>38</sup>

Teaching is a far more significant process than mere lesson-hearing or lesson-giving. . . . In a word, the end of our teaching is not mere information but character. And character is expressed through action. Our task, therefore, is no less a one than the modification for the better of human behavior.<sup>39</sup>

Much of the counsel that Bennion has given to teachers centers around the need for constant preparation, as evidenced by the following:

✓ If I could just give one key to the teachers of the Church generally, I think I should say, Prepare, and then Prepare yet again. In my observation of pupils in our seminaries, in our Church schools, and in our Sunday Schools, the one declaration they make when they are dissatisfied with teachers generally is that crude expression: "we do not get anything out of it." To carry a message, all great teachers must prepare amply.<sup>40</sup>

✓ One of the great handicaps of the ordinary teacher is fragmentary, insufficient, stale, "rehashed" material. . . . One of the most fascinating things about teaching is that you have to learn so much to teach so little. . . . It still requires hours of time for me to prepare a good lesson.<sup>41</sup>

One of the most regrettable facts connected with some of our teaching is that teachers leave the preparation of their lessons until the few minutes just preceding their recitation hours. They then hurry through a mass of facts, rush into class and mull over these dry husks, unable in the rush even to see the kernel of truth lying within. Little wonder pupils tire of such rations. It is the

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<sup>38</sup>Bennion, *Fundamental Problems of Teaching Religion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-6.

<sup>39</sup>Bennion, *Principles of Teaching*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>40</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "Real Teaching--A Challenge," *Young Women's Journal*, Vol. XXXV (September, 1924), p. 464.

<sup>41</sup>Adam S. Bennion "The Power of Personality In Teaching," *Bennion Manuscripts*, Folder 35b.

teacher's obligation to "see through" and discover the gems that really make lessons worth while.<sup>42</sup>

✓ It is to be hoped that the day will soon be gone when the teacher will hurry through his lesson in the half hour just preceding his appearance before class. "Eleventh hour skimming" can no longer pass for preparation. Contrast the "eleventh hour" teacher with the one who, having read his lesson a week in advance, has spent the days since collecting rich, new material that will challenge the interest of his class. The latter teacher can start a discussion off with such a vital question, or with a consideration of such new aspect, that even the backward student will find himself interested. Curiosity stirs us all to inquire into the new and the extraordinary. Human nature always comes to the assistance of the teacher with a message.

We have too many instructors, too few teachers, teachers who are content only when they can stir students into a new consciousness of the glories of the gospel. To teach is to inspire.<sup>43</sup>

There is not excellence without labor. Our friends often say it is so easy for us to stand up to talk. They never suspect that for 20 minutes we put in eight hours. I am quoting the experience of this night.

Too many teachers never become inspiring teachers because they do not "perspire enough" in the process of preparation. That is a little crude,<sup>44</sup> but it is eminently true. There is no excellence without labor.

No successful teacher ever trusts to old preparation--neither does he rely solely upon "the inspiration of the moment." Some suggestions for Teaching Success:

1. Set up regular habits of systematic study.
2. Seek the stimulus that comes from regular contacts with outstanding men and women of your community.

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<sup>42</sup>Bennion, *Fundamental Problems in Teaching Religion*, op. cit., 114.

✓ <sup>43</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "How To Stimulate Interest in Gospel Study", The Improvement Era, Vol. XXI (December, 1917), p. 175.

<sup>44</sup>Bennion, *Candle of the Lord*, op. cit., p. 147.



3. Familiarize yourself with the Standard Works of the Church.
4. Read regularly in the standard magazines, including, of course, those published by the Church.
5. Form the habit of clipping and filing rich illustrative material to be used in riveting the truths you would have remembered.<sup>45</sup>

He certainly understood and taught, that the successful teacher does not rely solely upon preparation of subject material. He emphasized the importance of "student-study" on the part of the teacher. These next two quotes will explain what is meant by "student-study."

A pupil's responses are inherent in his very nature. They rest upon his birth--the native endowment given him by his parents; they rest upon the maturity of his development; they rest upon his previous experience; and they center in his immediate interests.

Whatever the lesson in hand may be, a teacher's greatest concern, as he stands before a class, is to be conscious of the personalities before him and their potentialities. In a homemade sort of way and in the interest of brevity, may we suggest that teachers may well work upon these six suggestions.

1. Be aware of pupil responses.
2. Be interested in them and what lies behind them.
3. Strive to know the home backgrounds out of which your pupils come. How have they been appealed to heretofore.
4. Watch for the natural reaction of your pupils as you proceed with the various steps of your lesson.
5. Take pains to keep pupils busy.

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<sup>45</sup>Bennion, Principles of Teaching, op. cit., p. 5.

6. Try to anticipate the developing interests of your pupils. As we often say in colloquial terms, try to keep one jump ahead of them. In other words, don't delay your process until the children leave you to follow their own interests. Try, rather, to be out in front far enough that they are kept busy following you. Remember, that the attempt to understand the human nature revealed in your class is one of the most fascinating things in teaching.<sup>46</sup>

It is so easy--perhaps perfectly natural--for those of us who teach to expect the pupils to come to us "where we are." All too frequently we try to demand, because of our authoritative positions, that children do that very thing. We are far wiser--and our art is of a very much higher order--if we undertake to discover the child "where he is."

One of the most stimulating single lines I have ever read was uttered by Michaelangelo. He was once asked what he was going to do with the rough block of marble on which he was setting about to go to work.

"There is an angel in that marble, and it is my business to get it out."

What a gift on the part of the teacher to recognize in every child the divine element which makes him one of God's children. To reach out for that quality, in children is what makes teaching so great an art.<sup>47</sup>

Then, too, Bennion was concerned about the qualities and personality characteristics a teacher must possess to be successful. He said:

If they (successful teachers) have special "recipes" for their achievements, they almost invariably analyze down to a few old fashioned ingredients which are the real "staff" of educational life. They consist of:

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<sup>46</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "The Challenge To Understand Human Nature," The Instructor, September, 1949, pp. 464-66.

<sup>47</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "Working With The Grain," The Instructor, October, 1949, pp. 520-21.



Ample Preparation--Clear cut and definite and rich in its concrete backgrounds. No one ever suspects in such preparation that a teacher is teaching so nearly up to the limit of his preparation that he seems to be in danger of falling over the precipice.

Recent Preparation--the kind of renewed contacts that breathe the freshness of new enthusiasm.

Cheeriness of Attitude--the "game" approach as if one enjoyed the class hour as he would a football game or a round of golf.

A Genuine Sympathy--a feeling akin to that which would be experienced were the children really yours. All great teachers have gone out of themselves to reach pupils. As evidence of this fact, but recall the teachers who have really led you up.

Artistic Performance--the kind of clarr-room performance which results in a boy's exclamation "that teacher sure knows her onion." The real teacher makes a life's business out of studying the technique of his profession. There is a key to every teaching situation --though no one key will fit all situations.

Honest Sincerity--Somehow pupils have the knack of finding out what a teacher really is. Unfortunately, the "bluffers" don't always sit in pupils' desks. A teacher just has to be what he professes or he ought not profess what he isn't.<sup>48</sup>

In the first place it is good to remember that a teacher who would have his pupils interested must himself be interested. If he would see their faces light up with the glow of enthusiasm he must be the charged battery to generate the current. Interest begets interest. It is as contagious as whooping cough--if a class is exposed it is sure to catch it. The teacher who constantly complains of a dull class, very likely is simply facing a reaction to his own dullness or disagreeableness. . . . Interest and enthusiasm are the sunshine of the classroom--they are to the human soul what the sun's rays are to the plant.<sup>49</sup>

It has been my observation in the school game, that whenever you find a teacher who has really won the hearts of boys and girls, who

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<sup>48</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "In Which Class Are You?," Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1247.

<sup>49</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Talk given in Salt Lake Tabernacle, April 20, 1924, Journal History (April 20, 1924).



stand out as the teacher of the institution, it is not the teacher who has merely great scholarship; it is always a teacher who reaches out with warmth of heart and impresses the children with the love that characterized the Master. . . .

When you find a real teacher, whether it is at the hearthstone or in a university, you will find beyond mere cold intellectuality that love which surpasses understanding.<sup>50</sup>

### Methods In Teaching

Bennion was of the opinion that any and all methods available, that gets the message across, were good methods. He was certainly opposed to the use of one or two methods only. This part of his philosophy is evidenced by the following:

The best way for a child to get an education, of course, is through experience. Nothing can ever compare with that. The second best way is through vicarious experience in which a child is permitted to profit by the experience of somebody else. One generation learns through experience and passes on its findings by way of counsel and direction and guidance. Teaching is instituted in order that we may economize time in the great process of education. Truths learned out of long experience become ours through the medium of a brief discussion.

We use courses of study and text books in order that we may systematize knowledge and conserve time. At regular intervals we come forward with some new pet idea. Out across the years of my teaching experience I have observed that every once in a while we come upon some new device--some new procedure--as if we had found some panacea for the education of a new generation. There is no such thing. There is no one single answer effective for all teaching situations. The progressive teacher--the keen student--uses all of the means available. He does not hesitate to use a new technique. He is open-minded and is willing to discard an old method or adopt a new one in the interest of securing results.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Bennion, Fundamental Problems In Teaching Religion, op. cit., pp. 74-5.

<sup>51</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "The Use of Pictures In Teaching," Speech given at Barratt Hall, Salt Lake City, Utah, January 24, 1944, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1496.



He was also much concerned with organization. He, himself, was a great organizer, and felt that successful teaching was based at least in part, upon careful preparation. Thus he gave suggestions on how a lesson should be prepared and organized. It is interesting to note that a very similar system as the one he suggested, as recorded below, is used in the Seminary Program today.

The successful preparation of a lesson involves at least five major steps. It is understood, of course, that these steps follow the reading through of whatever material is to be taught. They are named here that the problem of preparation may be grasped as a whole.

1. The Objective: A generalized statement, a kernel of truth about which all of the facts of the lesson are made to center. A lesson may be built upon a passage of scripture, on the experience of a person or a people, or on a vital question, etc. But in any case, though we are interested in the facts involved, we are interested not in the facts as an end in themselves, but rather because of the truth involved in the facts. In other words, we seek to sift out of the material offered in a lesson an essential truth which helps us in a solution of the problems of life. Attention to the objective is a guarantee against mere running over of matter of fact.
2. Organization: A teacher should outline his lesson so that pupils may easily follow him through the subject matter presented to the ultimate truth that lies beyond.

Outlining after a little thoughtful experience with it, becomes one of the simplest yet one of the most helpful devices which a teacher can use. Outlining is merely intellectual budgeting--staking out in advance the lesson landmarks which are to guide the discussion. Outlining enables the teacher to distinguish relative values, stressing important points and hurrying over less important ones. It makes it more easy also to eliminate irrelevant material. It is a guarantee that the lesson may be considered within the time limits and that the thoughts to be presented may be set down in orderly sequence. Outlining is to lesson preparation what sensible planning is to any other undertaking. Fancy starting on a journey with no thought as to destination, transportation facilities, major stops, points of interest along the way, etc. Common sense bids us all indulge in a checking over the situation before we set out.



3. Illustration: Illustrations are what make truth vivid. Successful teachers owe much of their success to their ability through story or incident to drive home to the experience of pupils those fundamental truths which in their general terms make but little appeal. One of the most helpful practices for teachers who would become effective is the habit of clipping and filing available illustrative material. There is a wealth of rich, concrete matter appearing regularly in our magazines and other publications. What is good today likely will be equally good a year or two years hence when we shall face the problem of teaching again today's lesson. An alphabetic letter file may be had for a few cents in which can be filed away all sorts of helpful material. It pays to collect and save!
4. Application: Having selected his objective, the teacher knows the result he should like to have follow his lesson, in the lives of his pupils. He knows too, their tendencies and their needs. In giving attention to application he is merely making a survey of the possible channel into which he can direct his pupils' activities. In considering application he asks, "Of what use will this material be in the experience of my pupils?" The test-application is the real test--both of the subject matter presented and of the effectiveness of the presentation.
5. Questions: Finally, a lesson preparation is not complete unless the teacher has formulated a few thought provoking questions which go to the very heart of the lesson. The question is the great challenge to the seeker after truth. It is easy to ask questions, but to propound queries that stir pupils to an intellectual awakening is a real art. Surely no preparation can be fully complete unless it involves: The selection of an objective. The orderly organization of material. The collecting of rich illustrations. The pondering of facts to their application. The formulating of at least a few thoroughly stimulating questions. Can we not agree to these steps as fundamental in the proper preparation of all our lessons?<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "Lessons--Their Function and Preparation," The Juvenile Instructor (September, 1928), pp. 503-04.



### The Rewards Of Teaching

To the teacher is given the privilege of pointing to the higher life. He is the gardener in the garden of life. His task is to plant and to cultivate the flowers of noble thoughts and deeds rather than to let the human soul grow up to weeds. This purpose becomes all the more significant when we realize that the effects of our teaching are not only to modify a life here of three-score and ten--they are impressions attendant throughout eternity.<sup>53</sup>

Teaching is a joy-full privilege. So much is written about the techniques of this "greatest of the fine arts" that we may, if we are not careful, regard it as essentially a mechanical process. Teaching is creative. It is challenging--but it is eminently rich in its spiritual rewards.

1. The enrichment of the spirit.
2. The guarantee of one's own growth and development.
3. The position of teacher exercises a restraining influence for good on the moral life of the teacher.
4. One of the greatest joys is to love children and attempt to understand them. There is real satisfaction in watching pupils develop.
5. The teacher enjoys the uplifting associations of fellow teachers.
6. Contentment of mind that comes as a result of a duty well done.<sup>54</sup>

### Optimism

Adam S. Bennion was an eternal optimist. In fact, this was one of the high points of his personality. He spread cheer and joy wherever he went because of the optimistic point of view he continually carried.

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<sup>53</sup>Bennion, Fundamental Problems In Teaching Religion, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>54</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1496.



Especially was this true in his philosophy concerning youth. When many would decry the "evils" of the coming generation, Bennion would always express an opposite view. He felt that the youth of the Church were marvelous, and he expressed on many occasions his complete faith and confidence in them. Note the following:

I give it as my judgement that the young men and women of today, much as they are charged with carelessness, and much as they are charged with wantonness and irreligion and all else--if they have those qualities then you and I have let them get them. They have not wilfully sought them out--they have stumbled perhaps, into them, because you and I, or somebody else, have not been able to stimulate them and lead them.--I am glad to be able to report, and I bear that testimony here in conclusion today, that there are in our Church eight-thousand young men and women of high school age who every day in the week receive religious training. There have been in session today in this Church something like 22,000 young men and women giving their attention to Christian ideals.<sup>55</sup>

I think if I could pick out of the world those objects which strike me as the most wonderfully beautiful of all that I have ever seen, I would ask the privilege to choose a group of those young girls just budding into young womanhood. That is a wonderful stage, and that is the stage which you are privileged to crown your work with. They are full of difficulties, yes, but if it is your privilege to tough a tremendous force in the future of the world.<sup>56</sup>

In the last issue of *Colliers* . . . there is a striking article, "Eighteen Million Teen-agers Can't Be Wrong." I have read two other studies since reading that document, and from them all I bring you this wholesome thought: All of the people that appear before these judges--all of the offenses that are committed--are committed by less than five per cent of the available group that might come before them. I am so happy to join with you this morning. I don't bring you any

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<sup>55</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Talk given at Salt Lake Tabernacle, November 23, 1924, Journal History (November 23, 1924).

<sup>56</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "Our Girls" (An address to the 23rd Annual Convention of Primary Association Officers of L.D.S. Church, June 9, 1925, Barratt Hall, Salt Lake City, Utah), Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 750.



preachment by way of harrassment; I come believing in you. I am looking at the ninety-five per cent--I think at the "Y" I could safely raise it to ninety-eight per cent--of fine, wholesome, ambitious young people.<sup>57</sup>

God bless you fine young people to catch the spirit of your ancestors and also catch the spirit of your future. And as a result of the inspiration of this seminary work may no young man nor no young woman in this group settle down to the mediocrity that attaches to thoughtlessness and carelessness. May you have the inspiration to live worthily and to achieve nobly. The pioneering of a new frontier is the pioneering you may do if you really catch the fire.<sup>58</sup>

And finally, his counsel to teachers to be optimistic as well, in their dealings with the youth:

Children live so naturally in an atmosphere of happiness and fun that teachers of religious instruction may well guard against making their work too formally sober. Frequently teachers feel the seriousness of their undertaking so keenly that they worry or discipline themselves into a state of pedagogical unnaturalness. There is very great force behind the comment of the student who appreciated the teacher who could be human. . . .

To be cheerful without being easy is a real art. Liberty is so often converted into license, and a spirit of fun so easily transformed into mischief and disorder. And yet cheerfulness is the great key to the human heart.

An attitude of looking for the good in pupils will lead to a response of friendliness on their part which is the basis of all teaching.<sup>59</sup>

It is unfortunate that some of our people spend their time finding fault with other denominations. Let us rather teach the beauties of the Gospel as revealed to us and in that way lead others to worship as we do.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Bennion, The Candle of The Lord, op. cit., pp. 125-6.

<sup>58</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Address to Southern California Seminaries, March 15, 1954, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 516.

<sup>59</sup>Bennion, Fundamental Problems In Teaching Religion, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>60</sup>Adam S. Bennion, What It Means To Be A Mormon, Deseret Sunday School Union, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1917, p. 160.



The foregoing pages have recorded excerpts from the writings and speeches of Adam S. Bennion, in an attempt to elucidate some of his educational philosophy. For obvious reasons only a fragment of all he taught, wrote or said on the subject is herein presented. Volumes may be required to present adequately a full coverage, but such has not been the purpose of this study. That which is herein presented is intended to be representative of his thoughts and feelings relative to education, in the hope that educators and students may come to appreciate more fully his contribution in their behalf.

#### Summary

In the developing of a philosophy, whether it be religious, educational, scientific or moral, one tends to form philosophical concepts from his environment. Of course, the broader the environment, the greater is the selection of concepts the individual has to choose from in the formation of his own personal philosophy. Since Adam Bennion had such a broad environment, including home, Church, public schools, and associations at four major universities, his philosophy was likewise broad and comprehensive.

Being a devout Latter-day Saint, he shared much of the philosophy of L.D.S. Church leaders as regards education. To him, and them, education was linked closely with religious doctrine; namely that in order for man to achieve his highest possibility, that of becoming like God, education on all levels and all subject areas, both religious and secular, was a prerequisite. All of his life he displayed his belief in that philosophy by his devotion to education, both as a scholar and teacher.



However, being the optimist that he was, and being the recipient of many educational environments, he did not share the same view with some of his contemporaries as regards secular education by the Church. Some of the Church leaders were suspicious of the public schools and some believed that teachers there would willfully and deliberately attempt to destroy the faith of young L.D.S. boys and girls. Bennion, having taught in the public schools, held a different view, and while he was not blind to an occasional exception, felt that the majority of public school teachers were dedicated, helpful people. It was this part of his philosophy that prompted his proposals that the Church concentrate solely on religious education and leave secular education to the public schools.

Another part of his educational philosophy involved the professionalism of the teacher. Probably because of his associations with James E. Talmage and Milton Bennion, he was vigorously opposed to laxness of any kind. Many of his preachments, whether to student or teacher, contained admonitions to prepare adequately. He was convinced that where adequate preparation was made in teaching, failure was an impossibility. He felt that teaching was the "greatest of the arts" and that the true teacher would dedicate his life to the improving and developing of that art. Consequently much of his counsel to teachers was a sharing of methods and ideas to help bring that development about.

Still another significant part of his philosophy centered in the central objective for both religion and education. To him, the objective of both was the same; namely to build character. He was a

practical man, and felt that religion and education should be practical. To merely memorize long passages in the Bible was meaningless unless the principles in those passages be put into practical use by the student. His philosophy was that all education and all religion should be defined in practical terms to the building of strong character on the part of the students. If this were properly done, and the character formed, then students would be able to solve the problems of life through adequate pre-preparation. Much of this philosophy is still prevalent in Church educational objectives today.

Suffice it to say, that even though he entered the business world during the latter period in his life, education was always paramount in his thinking, and the philosophy which he possessed lives on under the leadership of another generation trained and greatly influenced by him.



## CHAPTER VI

### HIS LASTING CONTRIBUTIONS

#### His Role In Shaping Policy

No doubt some of the greatest contributions of a lasting nature that Adam Bennion made as Superintendent were in the area of Church educational policy. At the outset of his administration in 1919, the General Church Board of Education spelled out his duties as Superintendent in some detail. Included among them was his responsibility to suggest new policy for the Board's consideration. This he did with regularity. He had been in his assignment less than a year, when in March of 1920, he proposed his first major policy. This proposal called for the Church's withdrawal from the field of secular education, or in other words, an abandonment of the Church schools on a secondary level in favor of the theological seminaries.<sup>1</sup>

The other most notable major policy proposal came in 1926, when he proposed that the Church withdraw from secular education on a college level as well.<sup>2</sup> Although this latter proposal was not immediately or ever completely effected, it did become Church policy, and much of the work done by Bennion's successor, Joseph F. Merrill, was a carrying out

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the General Church Board, March 3, 1920.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., February 3, 1926.

of that policy.<sup>3</sup>

This latter proposal, presented personally by Bennion to the Board, is descriptive of the genius Bennion had for thinking a problem through. The document was carefully prepared and beautifully detailed, including a past history of L.D.S. education, the present status, and suggested recommendations. When he left his assignment in 1928, he again presented much of the same information and recommendations for future considerations of the Board relative to Church education.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, the far-reaching effect of these two major policies has been the development of the Seminary and Institute Program of today. These two programs (Seminary on the secondary level and Institute on the college level) were Bennion's solution to providing a religious educational supplement to the secular training provided by the public schools. As has been mentioned already, much of his total energy was spent in laying the groundwork for the success of those two programs. According to O. C. Tanner, "there is no question but what he put our seminary system on the broad base and in the momentum that made it what it is today. He gave it a momentum that carried on and on."<sup>5</sup>

There were other policies proposed by Bennion, of less importance than those just mentioned. Most of them included clarification of the

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<sup>3</sup>Clark, op. cit., p. 324.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Obert C. Tanner, February 4, 1969.



role of the stake boards of education relative to the seminaries. One of these was to clarify the financial responsibility that the stake assumes for seminary.<sup>6</sup> Another was to define duties and responsibilities of local stake boards.<sup>7</sup>

One policy enacted in 1921 is interesting in light of some of the recent controversy regarding dress standards at the Church University. Some of the more militant modern-day protesters have at least suggested that the Church or university has no right to dictate what a person shall or shall not wear. These young people may be interested to learn that the recent decisions of the university administration are not without precedent. For in 1921, (the age of the "flapper") the Board endorsed a proposal by Bennion calling for dress reform on the campuses of the Church schools. His proposal was as follows:

Supt. Bennion suggests, and the Commission endorses the suggestion, that we instruct all our school authorities that so far as our schools are concerned, we will not tolerate the ultra-fashionable and immodest dressing now in vogue, and that we are going to stand for higher standards in dress, both in girls and boys, in the interest of economy and morals. We would like to have the sanction of the Board to send out, first, a communication to all our principals and secondly, to the presidents of stakes and bishops, to the effect that we expect our young people to be properly clothed for their school work, and that the pupils will be required to comply with proper standards in dress.<sup>8</sup>

Still other policies were proposed clarifying the role of the

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<sup>6</sup>Minutes of the General Church Board, October 27, 1920.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., February 7, 1923.

<sup>8</sup>Minutes of the General Church Board, June 29, 1921.

superintendent's office in relationship to the stakes, the schools, etc. These latter policies were not too far-reaching, since they dealt mainly with the time in which Bennion served, but they are significant to indicate the power of persuasion which he was able to generate in behalf of his personal projects. Almost without exception his policy proposals were accepted by the Board. Suffice it to say, this is indicative of the great confidence and trust which the Board placed in the judgement of this young, but wise educational leader.

#### A Professionalism For Church Education

Another very great contribution made by Bennion was the professionalism that he brought to his office and then in turn, to the whole Church education system. He regarded teaching as an artful profession. To him there was no greater assignment in the world than that of teacher. He wanted all of the teachers to feel that way about their assignments, and consequently launched some campaigns to help bring this feeling about.

One of his first campaigns was to improve teacher salaries, believing that the better salary would permit the Church to be more selective in hiring the better teachers. As early as August 1919, he wrote letters to both State Superintendent G. N. Child and Elbert Thomas, Secretary at the University of Utah, requesting full salary schedules for teachers and principals.<sup>9</sup> He likewise reviewed carefully the salary

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<sup>9</sup>Correspondence and other documents located in the Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 331.



schedules of the Church school teachers,<sup>10</sup> and recommended that seminary principals be on an equal basis with high school principals,<sup>11</sup> although their work was not as demanding.

Fair salaries were only one phase of his program, however, for he believed that in order to maintain a high standard, the teacher and seminary principal must continue to improve, progress and grow in his profession. To accomplish this, Bennion had two major programs. One was the in-service training which he inaugurated with the summer-school workshop. In order to insure the teacher's required attendance at these workshops, he recommended to the Board that seminary teachers be hired on a twelve-month contract instead of ten, the recommendation becoming policy in April, 1921.<sup>12</sup> This policy is still in effect today.

His other major program for teacher self-improvement lay in his constant admonitions to the teachers to seek higher learning in advanced degrees. To encourage teachers to do this, he used the magnetism of his persuasive personality along with his own personal scholastic example. Speaking of his influence on him in this regard, Sidney Sperry said, "his enthusiasm was contagious. He had a great ability to stimulate men. He motivated me to get a better education and advanced degrees. He started the movement for higher degrees."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Interview with William E. Berrett, February 19, 1969.

<sup>12</sup>Minutes of the General Church Board, April 12, 1921.

<sup>13</sup>Interview with Sidney Sperry, February 19, 1969.

Another great boost for encouraging seminary teachers to pursue higher degrees came with the inauguration of a sabbatical leave program. From the General Board meeting of June 2, 1920, comes the following:

Commissioner McKay then reported that Supt. Bennion would like a recommendation submitted to the Board, which the Commissioners approved, that teachers who have served in the Church School System seven years be granted a furlough for one year on half pay for the purpose of going to school to do advanced or post graduate work, in each case upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and subject to the approval of this Board. After some discussion the motion was seconded and carried.<sup>14</sup>

This program is still in effect today, and no doubt many have been the recipients of this avenue to the obtaining of a higher degree.

Still one other program sponsored by Bennion in encouraging teachers to excel was the teacher merit-rating system, designed to reward the superior teacher with a higher salary than his peers. This program, started by Bennion,<sup>15</sup> although having undergone several revisions, is still in operation in the seminary program today. It is interesting to note that merit-rating was a part of Bennion's philosophy all of his life. In 1952, speaking to Salt Lake City teachers in convention, he said:

In the matter of teachers' salaries, a conscientious study is being made to make salaries in some way commensurate with teaching talent. To treat all teachers alike is to fail to give incentive to those superior teachers, who, after all, are the strength of any institution.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Minutes of the General Church Board, June 2, 1920.

<sup>15</sup>Interview with William E. Berrett, February 19, 1969.

<sup>16</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Speech given to Salt Lake City teachers at South High School, December 11, 1952, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 228.



Being the professional that he was, both teacher and administrator of both secular and religious instruction, his goal was to place Church education on a high plain. Berrett summed up his contribution in this area, when he said, "he upgraded the profession of teaching in the Church schools. He gave it status and made it respectable to teach seminary."<sup>17</sup>

#### A Teacher of Today's Leaders

Certainly one of the marks of greatness in a man is measured in the deeds and accomplishments of those whose lives he touched. As teacher, Bennion had the privilege of touching the lives of many of today's leaders. That he influenced their lives greatly is evidenced from the following tributes paid to his memory. Ezra Taft Benson, member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles of the Church, and former United States Secretary of Agriculture, states:

It may come as somewhat of a surprise to some when I say that Brother Adam S. Bennion, who was older than he appeared, was my teacher. I am probably younger than I appear, but Brother Bennion was one of the truly great teachers who have touched my life.

For a term at the Alpine summer school, of Brigham Young University, I was fortunate enough to sit at the feet of Adam S. Bennion in a course that I shall never forget--a course in biography. I remember the term paper which he assigned to us. It caused us to turn the searchlight on our own lives. The subject was "Why I Am What I Am." Under his stimulating direction that group of students searched their souls for the influences that had come into their

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with William E. Berrett, February 19, 1969.

lives, the examples that had been set for them, the temptations that had crossed their paths, and the influences of the Church and of good men and women. I still have that term paper; I am grateful to Brother Bennion that he turned my thoughts inward and made me analyze my own life and the influences which had affected the life of a young man up to that time. I am grateful for the contribution which he made as one of the great teachers of the Church. My life has been enriched. He helped inspire me to seek the good things which I enjoy.<sup>18</sup>

A Hamer Reiser, Assistant Secretary to the First Presidency of the Church, said:

His vivid and sparkling commendation, when we earned it, written on the returned, daily theme was better than a pay check and the best motivation.

To teach by example was natural for him. We learned our most abiding lessons by imitating Adam Bennion. This early association fixed for my life my appreciation and expectation of him.

He as teacher, let us know that being in sophomore composition he would engage the presumption that we had met the course prerequisites and that he would expect superior performance.<sup>19</sup>

S. Dilworth Young, of the First Council of Seventy in the Church, was student-body president at Granite High School when Adam Bennion was the principal. He stated that "two men stood out to me as beacon lights in fair-play and honor--Adam Bennion and Willard Ashton. Bennion had a great influence on my life." According to Elder Young, there was a championship basketball game played between Granite and another school. As a member of the team, Young, along with the other team members, had overheard the other team's coach giving instructions to his team prior

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<sup>18</sup>Ezra Taft Benson, General Conference Talk given in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, April 5, 1958, The Improvement Era, June, 1958, p. 433.

<sup>19</sup>George R. Hill, "Feed My Sheep Was Fulfilled," The Instructor, Vol. XCIII (April, 1958), p. 107.



to the game. These instructions were to employ unsportsman-like tactics on the opposing team in an all-out effort to win. Once the ball-game was underway, the Granite team quickly moved to a 16 to 0 score. It was then that the "dirty" tactics commenced, knocking one of the Granite players unconscious, and blacking the eyes of two others. The game finally ended with the other team winning, 54 to 16. Granite's coach, Willard Ashton, would not permit retaliation on the part of his players. If they did resort to "dirty tactics" they were immediately benched. After the game, Bennion walked over to the principal of the other school and severed athletic relationships with that school, thus emphasizing the importance of fair-play and honor above the importance of winning. "It was a lesson I have never forgotten."<sup>20</sup>

Gerrit de Jong Jr., former Dean of the College of Fine Arts at Brigham Young University, states:

Forty-one years ago Adam S. Bennion walked into my life. A young teacher of music, languages and my religion at Murdock Academy in Beaver, Utah, I had not yet begun my college training. . . .

I can still see him. There he stood, the embodiment of all that I had ever dreamed of becoming: a scholar, a gentleman, a churchman, a powerful and persuasive speaker, an influence for all that is good in life. Right then and there, he kindled in my innermost soul an unquenchable fire and enthusiasm. I resolved that day to study relentlessly and go academically as far as my talents and mental equipment would permit.<sup>21</sup>

And Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles of the Church adds:

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<sup>20</sup>Interview with S. Dilworth Young, March 10, 1969.

<sup>21</sup>George R. Hill, op. cit., p. 106.

To pay my tribute to his memory, I would like to borrow words from Thomas Curtis Clark who expressed the feeling of many thousands toward Elder Adam S. Bennion when he said: "I saw him once, he stood a moment there. He spoke a word that laid his spirit bare. He clasped my hand, then passed beyond my ken, but what I was, I shall not be again."<sup>22</sup>

And finally, George R. Hill, Superintendent of the Deseret Sunday School Union, summing up some of Bennion's qualities, said:

He had a passion for teaching others how to teach and how to improve their teaching. Within five years of his call to the general board of the Deseret Sunday School Union in 1915, he had written a most helpful little book, Principles of Teaching, timely today as when written--written expressly to help Sunday School teachers. He tried to show the inexperienced teacher how to come to his class, well prepared, the lesson objective clearly in mind, a challenging approach, an intriguing presentation, and with conversion--the real test of teaching. By following his own teachings, Dr. Bennion had made of himself, a widely sought teacher, counselor and interpreter in almost the whole gamut of man's activities.<sup>23</sup>

#### A Continued Interest In Youth

His interest in young people never really ceased. Even after leaving the education world he continued actively engaged in programs to improve and inspire youth. One classic example would be that which occurred in 1931, when the nation was in the midst of a terrible depression. Many were out of work, many more were out of hope, and the young people were bewildered and confused, living in a world of uncertainty without promise for the future. It was then that Bennion, in cooperation with the editors of the Improvement Era, undertook the assignment to write a series of articles aimed at assisting young people to find themselves. This "Facing Life" series, as it was called, invited young people to send

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 105.    <sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 105.



in questions and problems from which the format for the articles was developed. One example from the series, depicting his wise counsel, follows:

I have seen scores of boys denied offers of fine opportunities because of inadequate preparation--I know of practically no one who at the end of a period of very careful adequate training has not been able to capitalize on his investment in himself.

Try this interesting experiment:

List the outstanding men in your state in representative fields of leadership--check against each man his preparation. See what dividends attach to complete training. Great crowds of freshmen storm our colleges for entrance. By the senior year how those crowds have dwindled! How few men will really pay the price of long years of painstaking preparation. The limitation of training is largely subject to your own control . . .

Would you remain a hired servant--train little.

Would you secure a job--train a little more.

Would you aspire to a profession or to the independence of an estate--train long and thoroughly, lay a big foundation if you would erect a structure worthy your finest aspirations.<sup>24</sup>

Arising out of the interest generated by this series were numerous invitations to attend youth conferences and conventions, which Bennion conscientiously attempted to fulfill. On some occasions, like the youth convention in Boise, Idaho in 1935, he used part of his vacation to attend. In this particular three-day convention he lectured and held discussion groups all three days.<sup>25</sup>

Also, although his assignment with the seminaries had formally

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<sup>24</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "What Are Your Limitations?," Improvement Era, Vol. XXXIV (April, 1931), pp. 333-34.

<sup>25</sup>Correspondence found in Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 987.

ended three years earlier, he combined with Obert C. Tanner to write two text books for the Junior Seminaries in 1931 and 1932. These texts were designed to allow the students complete self-expression in the solving of numerous case studies relating to typical problems of youth. The love and confidence which he felt for the youth is evidenced in his instructions to the teachers who would use the material. He said:

At the outset, may we suggest to you that this book has been built up from the point of view of having the pupils carry the burden of the discussion. They should do most of the talking. Lecturing is essentially out of place in this course. Your matured judgements may be richer, and you perhaps can express them in a more finished way, than can your pupils. But the real value of this work, under the inspiration of your leadership, lies largely in the free, easy thinking of pupils toward an intelligent solution of their problems. Even their imperfect reasoning toward their own answers will be more valuable to them than your superimposed, ready-made judgements.<sup>26</sup>

All of the years of his adult life were spent in service to the youth, either as teacher, or counsellor, or friend. On the day of his crowning achievement, in offering his acceptance speech as Apostle of the Lord, Jesus Christ, he said:

If my assignment may in some part be with these grand young people such as are here from the Brigham Young University today, it will be a glorious privilege to bear witness to a new generation of the glories of the gospel as they have blessed me at every turn of my life."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Adam S. Bennion and Obert C. Tanner, Problems And Youth, Department of Education, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1931, Preface.

<sup>27</sup> Adam S. Bennion, "Personal Witness," Improvement Era, Vol. XVI (June, 1953), p. 437.



### A Continued Interest In Education

Following his resignation as superintendent, Bennion was retained as a member of the General Church Board of Education, a post he held until his death on February 11, 1958.<sup>28</sup> In fact, shortly after his release, in March of 1928, a new advisory committee was appointed from the Board to replace the old executive committee. Bennion was selected, along with David O. McKay, Stephen L. Richards, and Richard R. Lyman, as a member of that advisory committee.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, from a supervisory or executive level, he continued his great interest and influence in Church education.

He was busily engaged elsewhere as well, being a very popular speaker at teachers' conventions all over the Western United States. In one such convention, held at the University of Southern California, he expressed his belief that at least five groups must share the responsibility for tomorrow's education. He said:

In a free country you cannot delegate the responsibility of education to any individual group. . . . First the parents, then the school, the board of education, the legislature, and business and industry, must work together for better schools. It is the hope of tomorrow that there will be intelligent cooperation between all five groups.<sup>30</sup>

His interest in education was not confined merely to his association with educators. Being an influential member of the business world,

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<sup>28</sup>Minutes of the General Church Board, February 1, 1928.

<sup>29</sup>Journal History (March 22, 1928).

<sup>30</sup>News item in the Deseret News, November 14, 1951.

he was a popular lecturer at scores of business conventions, where he often took the opportunity to remind businessmen of their obligations to education. To the Arizona Bankers in convention in 1954, he said:

I wish I had the genius, this morning, to burn this upon your souls. What are you doing for the next generation--in the interest of preserving this great heritage, the richest and the finest ever entrusted to any generation?

I love the liberty that's ours. I glory in the thoughts of being an American. I am so grateful for all that the institutions of this land have done for me, freely and without price. I often think nobody was ever more entitled to go to college with less to warrant it than your speaker. Nobody in this room came out of humbler circumstances. Left with nothing to go on, the little woman that believed in a son, the only one she had left after both the father, my father, and my brother had been taken. And I think I glory in this America of mine because a kid that hadn't any business going to college at all was picked up and invited in, and they didn't ever ask him his pedigree, and they didn't ever ask for his bank account. They just said "Son, if you want it, it's here." And it's to keep that thing alive, this privilege, this everlasting great opportunity in a free country, that I join with you this morning.<sup>31</sup>

His outspoken interest in education led him to many assignments in its behalf, which he accepted and to which he lent dedicated energy. One of the most notable of these assignments came in 1952, when he served as Chairman of the Utah Public School Survey Commission. According to Bennion, this commission was "comprised of sixty people asked by the Utah State Legislature to take a look at the schools of the state of Utah in an attempt to determine what the educational program ought to be, what it ought to cost, whether we're getting value received, just what is

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<sup>31</sup> Adam S. Bennion, *The Candle of the Lord*, op. cit., p. 199.



good procedure."<sup>32</sup> Many recommendations were made by the commission, three of which were extremely important to Bennion, and which reflect his feeling and attitude relative to the role government should play in education. His report carried the following:

Three of the Recommendations of this Survey I should like especially to call to your attention because of their possible far-reaching significance.

1. We recommend that the school lunch be continued--but that it be provided and paid for by local districts and the beneficiaries of it. Surely free children of pioneer ancestry need not be fed by the Federal and State Government. We recommend that the half-million dollars of State funds thus saved be transferred to the Uniform School Fund.
2. We recommend that in two districts of the State Pilot Plant studies be conducted for a period of two years in an attempt to work out an equitable and practicable plan for the incentive payment of teachers, so that good teachers may be encouraged to enter and to remain in the great teaching profession. We consider it a discouraging practice, tending toward mediocrity, to pay all teachers alike.
3. We recommend that the State Legislature, and our Governor, J. Bracken Lee, memorialize the Congress of the United States and President Eisenhower in a petition to lessen the drain of money from the State into the Federal Treasury to the end that more Utah money may be kept in Utah to meet Utah needs. . . . Keeping money at home to meet our needs is far sounder economic policy than soliciting so-called Federal Aid.<sup>33</sup>

In 1954 he was appointed a member of President Eisenhower's National Citizen's Council For Better Schools, where his specific assignment was to study the responsibility of the Federal Government for

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<sup>32</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Address to Citizen's Assembly on Education, Denver, Colorado, January 30, 1953, Bennion Manuscripts. Folder 228.

<sup>33</sup>Adam S. Bennion, Summary of Findings and Recommendations of the Utah Public School Survey Commission, 1953, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 2020.



education, and to make recommendations to the President.<sup>34</sup> His philosophy on the subject had already been declared in his report as chairman of the Utah commission. It was not surprising then, that his recommendation was made in opposition to Federal Aid. In a talk given at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, he gave the following reasons for his opposition.

The case against general Federal Aid to Education is most simply presented under these four statements--three of them essentially economic--the last one sociological.

1. The States are better able financially to meet their own educational needs than is the Federal Government.
2. There is no magic in the Federal treasury. The Federal Government cannot "give" anything to the states unless it first takes it away from the people and the institutions of those states. All taxable income and wealth are located within the borders of the 48 states.

If the Federal Government really wants to help the states and the local communities, let it take out less taxes. Let us leave some of the money in the states and the states will take care of their own problems. The discretion which can distribute can as easily assess or abate or collect. And in the process can reduce bureaucratic costs of administration.

3. It is sounder business for those who spend money to have to raise it. It is so easy to be generous with money provided from afar. It is a great safeguard to have to account immediately to those who pay the taxes. If federal collections seem less painful they are likewise more dangerous. . . .
4. But the argument against Federal Aid is not merely financial.

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News item in the Deseret News, June 18, 1954.



Basically, it is against further centralization of power in the Federal Government. . . .

Let's have no mistaken idea about the ultimate aim of the champions of Federal Aid. An appropriation of \$300 million dollars a year is not their objective. Their spokesmen talk in terms of \$20 billion over a five year period. Can anyone be naive enough to believe that Congress will appropriate that kind of money without specifying where and how it is to be spent--and then checking to see that it is so spent?<sup>35</sup>

### His Writings And Publications

As well as being a gifted orator, Mr. Bennion also displayed great talent with the pen. In fact, one of his most notable contributions of a lasting nature is to be found among his writings. It is not surprising to note that almost all of his publications were in the field of religious education. Fundamental Problems of Teaching Religion was first published in 1921, and has been republished since as a manual for teacher-training with many reprints, the latest of which occurred in 1958. Its philosophy is just as pertinent today as it was when first penned. In 1930 he wrote a manual of study for the Gleaners of the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association, entitled Gleaning. His What It Means To Be A Mormon, first written in 1917, was rewritten in 1929 as a text for the Junior Seminaries. In 1931 he teamed with Obert C. Tanner to write another text for the Junior Seminaries, entitled Problems of Youth. A year later, again teaming with Tanner, he produced Looking In On

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<sup>35</sup> Adam S. Bennion, Address given at the 60th Congress of American Industry, Hotel Waldorf-Astoria, New York, December 9, 1955, Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 1845.



Greatness. These latter two volumes were written with an emphasis on student problem-solving in the area of character education. Just prior to his death, in 1958, he outlined the format for his The Candle of the Lord, which was completed by his son Richard, with help from Richard L. Evans, a Mormon Apostle and close colleague to Dr. Bennion. This volume is a compilation of some of Bennion's most famous speeches.

In addition to the above mentioned books, Dr. Bennion also wrote many articles for periodicals, particularly the periodicals published by the Church organizations. These would include The Improvement Era, The Instructor, The Relief Society Magazine, and The Young Women's Journal.

In 1923, for a doctoral dissertation at the University of California, he chose to write on a problem centered in religious education. It was entitled, "An Objective Determination of Materials For A Course of Study In Biblical Literature." In the study he established the hypothesis that the chief objective in religious education is character development, which involves the formation of knowledge, attitudes or ideals, and habits. A second hypothesis suggested that the Bible was the best source for materials in building a course of study in character development. The problem centered around determining which parts of the Bible would be most effective in obtaining the end objective.<sup>36</sup> Part of the detail of the study involved the submitting of questionnaires to one hundred ministers, one hundred Biblical scholars and teachers, one hundred high school English teachers, one hundred people listed in Who's Who In

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<sup>36</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "An Objective Determination of Materials For A Course of Study In Biblical Literature" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1923), p. 1.



America, and one thousand pupils of high school grade, to obtain their judgement as to what constituted a meaningful course of study from the Bible.<sup>37</sup> The results or conclusions of his study were as follows:

1. That to date no adequate determination of the relative literary value of various parts of the Bible has been made.
2. That Biblical materials are being used in current courses of study which cannot be defended from the point of view of permanent value of subject matter or of interest.
3. That certain parts of the Bible have been consistently pre-eminent in allusions made in literature from Anglo-Saxon days to the present.
4. That certain other parts have had but little if any significance in the same literature.
5. That those parts of the Bible which have been most frequently referred to in literature are in the main parts which rank highest in the judgements of modern ministers, Biblical scholars, high school English teachers and high school pupils.

The final rank order list of Biblical items as drawn up in this study indicates the relative value of various parts of the Bible on a basis of the two criteria, permanent value of subject matter and interest, for a course of study in Biblical literature for pupils of high school grade.<sup>38</sup>

### Summary

Although born and raised in humble circumstances, through the determination and devotion to hard work that characterized his life, Adam Samuel Bennion carved for himself a place of honor in the field of

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Abstract.

education. Not only was he a sober, dedicated, scholarly student all of his days, but a highly successful and beloved teacher and administrator in both public and religious education.

While serving his Church as Superintendent of Education, he made perhaps his greatest contribution to education. While serving in that position he was instrumental in promoting much new policy for Church education, much of which is still in effect today.

He brought to his office a whole new philosophy and professionalism, centered in the teacher as a learned and highly trained professional. He devoted much of his time and energy in behalf of the teacher, in an effort to raise him to new heights of respectability.

As a teacher and administrator he touched the lives of many of today's leaders, influencing them for good during their plastic years. No doubt some of the lessons in character building that they learned from Adam Bennion have helped them to formulate the habits and ideals that have made them leaders.

And on through the years, a continued interest in the youth and in education helped to keep Bennion young at heart. As he mingled with the youth in many associations, his constant admonition to them was to seek the nobler, higher life, by using their God-given abilities to reach out and experience all that is lovely and good. Less than a year before his death, while speaking to the students at B.Y.U., he said:

I thought as I drove down here this morning, "can you just fancy that instead of sitting here in the presence of these judges, you are sitting in the presence of the great judge, who one day will pass judgement on all of us?" I think when we appear before him, it won't



be merely a chronicle of the things we did which were wrong, alone; it will also be "What did you do with the glorious heritage which was entrusted to you?"<sup>39</sup>

No question but what Adam Samuel Bennion stood in good stead with an answer to that question.

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<sup>39</sup>Adam S. Bennion, "What Will You Make Of Your Life?" B.Y.U. Speeches of the Year, March 5, 1957, p. 3.

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APPENDIX A

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR SEMINARY COURSES

## BASIC AIMS IN TEACHING THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Acquaintance with historic background.
  - a. Customs, habits.
  - b. Geography.
  - c. Government.
  - d. Relation of significant historical facts.
2. Mastery of the Doctrines taught by the Master.
  - a. His divinity.
  - b. His mission and work.
  - c. The principles of the Gospel.
  - d. The organization of the Church.
  - e. His method of teaching.
  - f. Modernization of His parables.
  - g. Memorization of selected passages.
3. The constant application of His teaching in daily conduct.

## BASIC AIMS IN TEACHING THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Knowledge of the existence and personality of God.
2. Knowledge of the historical background of Israel's development.
3. The preparation for the Dispensation of Christ by the building of the Messianic ideal through:
  - a. The lower law of sacrifice.
  - b. Prophecy.
  - c. The quickening of the moral ideals of Israel.



4. God's ways of dealing with Israel as it helps explain the present world situation.
5. Knowledge of prophecy relating to the Dispensation of the Fulness of times.
6. Knowledge of the more idealistic Old Testament. Stories such as pupils will find alluded to in literature.
7. Acquaintance with notable Old Testament biographies.
8. Consideration of the consequences attending righteousness and unrighteousness.

#### BASIC AIMS IN THE TEACHING OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

1. To give each student a love for the book.
2. To give him a firm belief in the book--
  - a. By study of the book itself.
  - b. By a consideration of concrete external evidences.
3. To make the book a moral, spiritual, and inspirational guide for the student.
4. To make the student feel zealous in passing his inspiration to others.
5. To inspire ideals of character by acquaintance with the notable Book of Mormon biographies.
6. To analyze social movements illustrating the effects of righteousness versus wickedness on the lives of the people.
7. To point out the prophetic spirit that pervades the book.
8. To cultivate an appreciation of the book as a new witness to Jesus Christ and as a tribute to the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith.

#### BASIC AIMS IN TEACHING CHURCH HISTORY

1. Mastery of the historical background behind the achievements of our people.

2. Appreciation of Church organization.
3. Appreciation of the significance of the Priesthood.
4. Thorough acquaintance with the doctrine of the Church.
5. Appreciation of the blessedness of isolation.
6. Appreciation of our economic achievement.
7. Appreciation of our social achievement.
8. Comparative study--Mormonism and other world religions.
9. Working knowledge of at least these books:
  - a. Doctrine and Covenants.
  - b. One Hundred Years of Mormonism.
  - c. Life of Joseph Smith.
  - d. Outlines of Ecclesiastical History--Roberts.
  - e. The Great Apostacy--Talmage.
10. The bringing together in a solution of problems presented, all of the materials discussed during the various years of the high school course.

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This information was taken from the Bennion Manuscripts, Folder 436.



APPENDIX B

SUMMER SCHOOL TRAINING FOR SEMINARY TEACHERS

## SUMMER SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEW TESTAMENT TEACHERS

1. Name not less than twelve events in the life of Christ that should be emphasized by reviews and examinations.
2. Give references to not less than twenty sayings of Christ that should be made a part of every student's memory by study, drill, and review.
3. Which are the most important seven places you would drill on?
4. Name nine outstanding New Testament characters to whom you would frequently refer in reviews.
5. Name seven events in the history of Christianity after the final ascension that you would emphasize in reviews.
6. Wherein is this course supreme in creating an attitude of spiritual heroism?
7. Name not less than five lessons that are an inspiration towards ethical idealtiy.
8. What objective common to both may be reached through the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount?
9. Wherein is a life motivated by the attraction of good superior to one motivated by the repulsion of evil?
10. What declaration of Jesus indicated that one of his objectives was to so teach that his teachings would move his students strongly in his absence?
11. How would you show that mercy did not rob justice in the Parable of the Prodigal Son?
12. How would you utilize the cooperative inclinations of students in their study?
13. What provisions would you make for the student who can and wants to do more than the regular class requirements?
14. How would you guard the dull student against discouragement?
15. How would you in your teaching fortify your students against dread of exams that must be given?



## SUMMER SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS FOR OLD TESTAMENT TEACHERS

1. List in chronological order the names of ten outstanding characters of the Old Testament with whom students should have a ready historical acquaintance.
2. Name ten important events to receive attention in reviews.
3. Give what you consider to be six never-to-be-forgotten events.
4. Give names of eight places the location of which should be fixed by map drill and a knowledge of which should be emphasized in reviews.
5. Why are books in the hands of the students indispensable.
6. Name three objectives that must not be lost sight of in teaching religion.
7. What are the teacher's specific obligations in teaching this course:  
a. to the state? b. to the Church? c. to the student?
8. What objectives can be reached with the Bible in the hands of the student that cannot be reached otherwise?
9. Of what specific value is the outline: a. to the teacher? b. to the student?
10. How does the forming of habits against attitude affect character?
11. What is the most effective way of securing an attitude towards every student getting and having for use, a Bible and an outline?
12. Name not less than five lessons in the course that are especially suited to foster faith in divine promises.
13. Mention several ways of emphasizing essentials.
14. Tell how to make an assignment substantially attractive.
15. How can a teacher create a high-minded, joyous attitude towards examinations?

## SUMMER SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS FOR CHURCH HISTORY TEACHERS

1. Give a chronological list of not less than fifteen Church History events to which you would give prominence in reviews.
2. List seven revelations upon which you would place emphasis.
3. Give ten dates entitled to frequent review considerations.
4. Name twelve places entitled to map drill consideration.
5. Mention one outstanding individual characteristic of each president of the Church and one characteristic common to them all.
6. What are the chief purposes of teaching Church History?
7. Mention some of the expectations and determinations that the course should inspire.
8. Name some of the books by which the text may be profitably supplemented in reading the objectives of the course.
9. Name two purposes to be aimed at in teaching prophecy.
10. Why the Book of Mormon?
11. Name ten hymns that can be made to contribute richly to this course.
12. What do you make of the question in the outline of lesson 81?
13. How do you become acquainted with your students?

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The above was taken from Adam S. Bennion Papers, Box 7, Folder 37.



## QUESTIONS DISCUSSED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Why should the enrollment of students not be held in the high school building?

It is the best policy to register seminary students in the seminary building, so that we may not be charged with "bootlegging religion in the public schools."

In some localities the seminary principal has been invited to register his students in the high school building. This practice should be tactfully and graciously changed so that seminary students may be registered in the seminary building.

The practice is followed in some high schools of registering students for seminary classes at the same time as they register for high school subjects, the seminary principal being present but not taking any active part. Regarding this procedure, Superintendent Bennion said, "if you are in the high school building and do not do anything, I see no reason for your being there, and if you do anything, I am fearful of it."

The suggestion was made that students might be registered for the ensuing year in the spring, which would probably obviate the rush at the time of high school registration in the fall.

2. In what high school functions may a seminary teacher consistently participate?

It is altogether proper for a seminary teacher to attend the high school faculty meetings, although it is not wise for him to vote on any issues of high school administration lest he be charged with

coloring the school policies.

A seminary teacher should join fully with the high school principal and faculty in a social way, cheerfully giving help wherever help is needed.

The following activities of seminary principals were reported as ways of cooperating with the high school:

At the invitation of the high school, directing a school play or opera.

Acting as chairman of a committee whose duty it was to arrange the program of the high school chapel exercises.

Being on hand at athletic games.

Of course, local conditions largely influence the extent to which one can participate in high school functions. If the sentiment is against your joining hands with the high school, it would be unwise to do so. However, if conditions are favorable, there is no objection to cooperating with the high school.

3. Is it proper for a seminary principal to referee in athletic contests?

It was the concensus of opinion that the matter of judging and refereeing contests is always a delicate one, and that it is difficult to judge impartially, at least in the eyes of the losers, and that there is a possibility of losing friends. It was agreed that it is a wholesome thing for the seminary principal to participate with the young people in their activities and athletic games and to lend a helping hand wherever possible, but that it is wiser not to act as a judge or referee, especially where schools within the stake are concerned.



4. School activities (class functions, examinations, lectures, entertainments, athletics) given during school hours may interfere with seminary attendance. What should be the attitude of the seminary teacher towards these conditions?

The thought given regarding this question was that the seminary class should be on a par with any of the high school subjects and that seminary standards should be in harmony with high school standards since credit is given for the seminary courses; and that they should not be made to suffer any more than any of the other classes from interference by high school activities. It was discovered that this is not an issue with any of the seminary teachers, that all of the high school principals are willing to recognize the relative importance of seminary courses with high school subjects.

It is thought to be a safe procedure to require all students who are absent from seminary to bring a written excuse to class when they return, and to report to the high school the names of students who are absent from seminary, in order that the sluffing of classes may be guarded against.

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The above was taken from Adam S. Bennion Papers, Box 7, Folder 38.

APPENDIX C

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND,  
THE PRESENT STATUS,  
AND THE POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
LATTER-DAY SAINT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, THE PRESENT  
STATUS, AND THE POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

I. HISTORICAL SKETCH

Latter-day Saint education sends its roots back into New York, Ohio, and Illinois. The Prophet Joseph, privileged to give us our great latter-day message of salvation, early based his learning upon two of the great fundamentals of all education--namely, honest inquiry and divine guidance. It is significant also that the Prophet was always eager in his pursuit of knowledge. In the course of a busy and tempestuous life he devoted much time to the study of law, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. "The Church has fostered education almost from the year of its founding in 1830. Committees began to select and write school books for special use in the Church schools as early as 1831. So great was the demand for education that only a portion of those calling for schooling could be accommodated in 1835. The experience of the church in Kirtland, Ohio, reveals the fact that in the face of its hardships the church proceeded to construct its first temple and that one of the first uses to which the upper floor of the temple was put was that of a school. The classrooms on that floor, still existing, are reminders of the school of the prophets. Even during the troublesome years from 1835 to 1847 when the people were compelled by persecution to move to a new locality every few years, schools were established at each new place of settlement. At Nauvoo, Illinois, the schools were becoming important, and a great university was being planned, when the Mormons were driven from the state."



With the great migration west one of the first concerns of the Saints after arriving in Great Salt Lake Valley was the organization of a school. Throughout the winter of 1847-48 a school was taught by Julian Moses. The authorities of Salt Lake City and other centers made ample provision for the maintenance of public schools. In spite of the hardships of those first few years of pioneer life, the Saints never forgot their ideals of learning. Books and school equipment purchased in the east were hauled by ox-team for the educational benefit of young and old. The founding of the University of Deseret, now the University of Utah, the oldest university west of the Missouri River, established when many of its founders still lived in most primitive cabins, is one of the most eloquent witnesses of the high aspirations of the men and women who constituted our pioneer forefathers.

In the early settlement of Utah and adjacent states it is perfectly clear that there were great difficulties in the way of financing education. No scheme of public education was fully under way. The pioneers operated largely as church groups. It is only natural, therefore, that in this early history the church should have been interested in fostering its own educational institutions.

A system of Church Schools became a natural sequence to pioneer settlement. The space of this article forbids a full account of these early developments. The General Board of Education was organized in 1888 Church educational affairs have been administered through four superintendencies to date: that of Karl G. Maeser, 1891-1901; that of J. M. Tanner, 1901-1906; that of Horace H. Cummings, 1906-1919; and that of Adam S. Bennion, 1919-1928.



The early attention of the Board was directed primarily to the problems incident to the operation of church academies. These institutions offered in the course of their development much that is now regarded as elementary education and gradually left that field to carry forward the regular program of an academy on the high school level. The transition from the academy to the junior college is a matter of our own day. As a matter of fact, the year 1919 marks largely the inauguration of a new educational policy in the church. Prior to that date much of the experience of the General Board of Education, as indicated, was centered in its academies. Religion Classes had been established, but these were conducted under the supervision of the General Board of Religion Classes. Teacher Training had been carried forward under the jurisdiction of the Deseret Sunday School Union Board. Seminaries had been established, but they were of such recent date that they had been incidentally provided for along with academies under the direction of the General Board of Education. The Deseret Gymnasium had been operated under a board of control. In 1919 the First Presidency of the Church appointed a Commission of Education, David O. McKay being Commissioner, with Stephen L. Richards and Richard R. Lyman, first and second assistants respectively. In that same year Adam S. Bennion was appointed Superintendent of Church Schools.

## II. ORGANIZATION

It may be interesting to glance briefly at the developments in each of the fields assigned the General Board for supervision, during a period of the last nine years.



It was evident that the Church could not operate academies which would serve all of the young people of the Church. It was also evident that all of the young people of the Church needed some kind of specialized religious training. By 1919, therefore, it became clear that the seminary should become the great agency of the Church for promoting religious education on the high school level. It also became evident that it would be to advantage to center other religious education elements under one general board of education. The work of the Religion Classes was assigned to the supervision of the General Board of Education in 1922. The supervision of Teacher Training was added in 1923, as was also a general oversight of the two gymnasiums: Deseret and Weber. During these four years a plan of administrative organization was worked out for the Church at large. Corresponding to the General Board of Education for the Church as a whole, stake Boards of Education were organized for the stakes, as were also ward Boards for the ward units. There now exists, therefore, in the Church a natural scheme of organization from the Presidency of the Church and the General Board of Education down through the smallest ward yet organized.

### III. CHURCH SCHOOLS

As already indicated it became increasingly clearer that the Church could not and ought not compete against the public high school. Prior to 1890 there were practically no public high schools in the state of Utah. In that year the Salt Lake City High School was organized with an enrollment of fewer than fifty pupils. In 1891, its enrollment was fifty-three. In 1893, it held its first graduation exercises, when



its total enrollment had reached only 103. At the present time the two public Salt Lake City high schools serve 3,415 senior high school students, in addition to the 2,575 ninth grade students now being served as a part of the junior high school movement. The Ogden high school was established about the same time as the Salt Lake City High School. No record is available which gives the date of the establishment of other high schools in this state, but they followed gradually after 1900, until at present there are 153 public high schools within the state. Church academies had been established from 1875 on. It is evident that the Church pioneered the high school field in Utah. It became evident that when the public high school was established, the Church was in the field of competition. Such competition was costly and full of difficulties. The following table indicates the dates of establishment of the various schools, together with the dates for the closing of those which have been closed.

	<u>Date of Opening</u>	<u>Date of Closing</u>
1. B. Y. University	1875	-
2. B. Y. College	1877	1926
3. L.D.S. College	1886	-
4. Fielding Academy	1887	1922
5. Ricks Academy	1888	-
6. Snow Academy	1888	-
7. Oneida Academy	1888	1922
8. Snowflake Academy	1888	1923
9. St. Johns Academy	1888	1921
10. Uintah Academy	1888	1922
11. Cassia Academy	1889	1921
12. Weber Academy	1889	-
13. Emery Academy	1890	1922
14. Gila Academy	1891	-
15. Juarez Academy	1897	-

16.	Murdock Academy	1898	1922
17.	San Luis Academy	1905	1923
18.	Summit Academy	1906	1913
19.	Big Horn Academy	1909	1924
20.	Millard Academy	1910	1922
21.	Knight Academy	1910	1921
22.	Dixie Academy	1911	-

The schools that were not closed were gradually curtailed so as to eliminate in them wholly the idea of competition with public high schools. We now operate eight schools, high school work being offered only in the L.D.S. College, Dixie College, Gila College and the Juarez Academy in Mexico. There are complications at the present attached to all of these institutions which have led us to hesitate in taking out completely the high school work offered. The other institutions, while they center their efforts in making Latter-day Saints and training them for carrying forward this great latter-day work, also specialize in the preparation of teachers who are to go out into public schools in this and adjoining states. The following table indicates the number of students, high school and college, and the number of graduates who have been served by Church Schools in the last nine years:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>		<u>Enrollment</u>	
	<u>High School</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>High School</u>	<u>College</u>
1918-19	4184	328	497	95
1919-20	5984	438	640	110
1920-21	6925	516	734	147
1921-22	6009	866	689	247
1922-23	5150	1370	836	234
1923-24	2531	1670	593	257
1924-25	1898	2095	503	404
1925-26	1972	2489	476	506
1926-27	1853	2274	462	538



#### IV. SEMINARIES

The first seminary in the Church was the Granite Seminary, established in 1912. The following table indicates the establishment of each of the seminaries since that date: (See table in the attached reproduction of an article which appeared in the Christmas edition of the Salt Lake Telegram.)

We are now, therefore, operating seventy seminaries, employing eighty-three teachers, who serve seventy-nine high schools. The total registrations for this year to date is 11,500. The accompanying reprint indicates more fully the backgrounds underlying this work and the scope of its program.

Two significant achievements in the seminary work in Idaho deserve special mention.

1. The securing of favorable action on the part of the State Board of Education approving the establishment of seminaries and the giving of public school credit for the work done in them.
2. The launching of seminary work on a collegiate level at the State University at Moscow and at the Branch at Pocatello.

#### V. RELIGION CLASSES

The following are perhaps the most outstanding features connected with the administration of Religion Classes during the past few years:

1. The adoption of a more or less permanent course of study and the preparation of suitable texts for each of the eight grades of work offered.
2. The simplification of the teaching process, and of the responses expected of pupils.
3. The inauguration of a policy of publishing through the Deseret News a weekly supplement of helpful illustrative material.

4. The increase in enrollment as indicated in the following table:

<u>Year</u>	
1922-23	39,336
1923-24	44,847
1924-25	52,328
1925-26	60,702
1926-27	61,131

5. The use of Church School and Seminary teachers as special aids in carrying to the stakes the messages of the Department of Education.

#### VI. TEACHER TRAINING

This movement has not made phenomenal progress. It represents an attempt to offer more or less expert guidance to a body of volunteer workers, many of whom have heretofore had but little expert training for their work. Successful teaching rests upon a clearly established technique, any progress toward the perfection of which generally is to be commended. Our records to date indicate that 10,982 officers and teachers are regularly giving their thoughtful consideration to the bettering of their teaching procedure. A number of stakes are doing an eminently fine piece of work and are delighted with the results secured.

#### VII. GYMNASIUMS

The Deseret Gymnasium, built in 1910 at a cost of \$215,000, is now serving annually some 3,600 patrons. Its total enrollment to date numbers 61,412. It offers 209 classes per week, with an estimated total attendance of 147,000. Its membership pays regularly about \$30,000 of its annual \$42,000 - \$45,000 costs. With the new annex added in 1926, at a cost of \$50,000, this is one of the finest gymnasiums in the country.



The Weber Gymnasium, built and equipped at a cost of \$300,000 opened its doors to the public in 1925. Already its membership is 1,316, made up of business men, seniors, intermediates, juniors, young boys, women, senior girls, junior girls, and young girls. Its membership pays annually \$20,000 of its total cost of operation of \$30,000. This gymnasium is rendering a very distinctive service to the people of Ogden and is a source of pride to them.

#### OBSERVATIONS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

##### I. Organization

- a. Due to changes in scope of our work, the title 'Superintendent of Schools' no longer seems appropriate or adequate. It may be that such a title as 'Commissioner or Director of Education' is more suitable.
- b. Because of the calling of Dr. Widtsoe to preside over the European Mission, it becomes necessary to complete the organization of an executive committee of the General Board.
- c. As our problems become more and more those of religious education, may it be advisable to consider the wisdom of centering in the General Board of Education, the supervision of the educational program of the Church, including the work of the auxiliary organizations.

##### II. Church Schools

These schools have made and are now making a very valuable contribution to the building of the young manhood and womanhood of the Church. Statements have already been laid before this board raising these questions:

- a. How far will the finances of the Church allow us to go in carrying forward an academic program, in the face of ever increasing needs in the realm of religious education.

- b. To what extent will the Junior College find itself in the position of the Academy of earlier days when the Public Junior College shall have been established in our Utah educational program.
- c. To what extent is the Church warranted in spending money in carrying forward a university program in a field where other institutions backed by well-nigh unlimited funds now operate throughout this land. May there be a way to offer adequate training for those who are to be our religious teachers and leaders without being under the necessity of expending large sums to carry forward an academic program.

### III. Seminaries

- a. Constant care and wisdom in the selection of teachers who not only meet all the academic requirements which may be specified by the state, but who shall be characters of such faith that the very contact with them will enkindle a testimony in the hearts of boys and girls.
- b. The extension of the service to meet the needs of all Latter-day Saint communities. Such an extension may at an early date involve the establishment of seminaries of high school grade in the following places:

In Utah: Price, Parowan, Bingham, Park City, Eureka, Ogden, Salt Lake, and a number of smaller settlements.

In Idaho: Idaho Falls, Ammon, Twin Falls, Blackfoot, St. Anthony, Firth, Weston, and Ashton.

In Arizona: Eager, Phoenix, Layton, and Sanford.

In Nevada: Bunkerville, Overton, and Ely.

In Wyoming: Evanston.

On the collegiate level:

The University of Idaho  
 The University of Idaho Southern Branch  
 The Utah Agricultural College  
 The Branch College at Cedar City  
 The University of Utah  
 The University of Arizona  
 The Phoenix Junior College  
 The Tempe Normal  
 The Flagstaff Normal



There has also been an inquiry from our people at Stanford. The future may justify at some such center as the University of Utah a School of Religion, where expert scholarship can be built up at a nominal cost in Greek, Hebrew, Egyptology, Comparative Religion, and other studies constituting a background for intensive religious research.

#### IV. Religion Classes

- a. The need of having written more supplementary readers for children--books interesting and faith-building, centering in the achievements of our Church and her people. We have a rich pioneer heritage which all too little is focused in the minds of our children.
- b. With the extension and socialization of the elementary school program, may it not be well to deliberate the need of more than one meeting of a religious nature during the week for elementary pupils--a meeting which may be kept wholly religious. At any event may it not be wise to work for a closer coordination of supervision in the matter of our week-day religious program.

#### V. Teacher Training

Personally, I feel that Teacher Training can be made to be of tremendous service in heightening the quality of the teaching done in the Church. To be of such value it needs, among other things, two reinforcements:

- a. Active championing on the part of presiding brethren, general, stake, and local.
- b. Further subdivision of its membership so that more specific adaptation of materials and methods can be made.

In view of the schedule of the new program as affecting the Priesthood and the Sunday School, the advisability of recommending the hour of 9 o'clock Sunday as a uniform time for holding Teacher Training classes.

## VI. Gymnasiums

It is suggested at times that perhaps these institutions should be made civic institutions that the Church may be relieved of the financial obligation of sustaining them. Relatively, from now on, that obligation should be nominal. I believe the institutions can be made practically self-sustaining and I am convinced that they exert an influence for good in maintaining the physical and moral ideals of our people far beyond our comprehension.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Adam S. Bennion



ADAM SAMUEL BENNION  
SUPERINTENDENT OF L.D.S. EDUCATION--1919 TO 1928

An Abstract of A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Department of Graduate Studies in  
The College of Religious Instruction  
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Religious Education

by  
Kenneth G. Bell  
August 1969

## ABSTRACT

The author attempts to analyze and evaluate the educational views, policies and contributions of Adam S. Bennion during his administration as Superintendent of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Educational Program.

Part of the study is dedicated to an intensive search of historical data to determine Church educational policy and philosophy prior to his administration.

His views on many religious and educational topics, taken from his personal, unpublished manuscripts, are quoted at length.

An attempt is also made to examine his role as a policy maker and to evaluate his contribution in light of present policy and philosophy in the L.D.S. Department of Education. Bennion's broad experience in public as well as private education prompted his proposals that the Church concentrate on religious education, leaving secular education to the public schools.

Finally an attempted evaluation is made of his contribution to the field of education subsequent to his assignment as superintendent of Church schools.