A TURBULENT COEXISTENCE:
DUANE HUNT, DAVID O. McKAY,
AND A QUARTER-CENTURY OF
CATHOLIC-MORMON RELATIONS

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Coming out of a history accented with violent persecution from outsiders, Latter-day Saints have responded warmly to members of other faiths who have treated them with even minimal humane consideration, despite disagreeing with their theology. Although Utah history contains many examples of vituperative attacks on Mormonism by members of various other religious groups, particularly Protestant, few such attacks came from Roman Catholics, who generally have been content to pursue their own Christian lives and to minister to their own community without attacking the beliefs and practices of others. Working from the unusual position of a minority church in predominantly Mormon Utah, Catholics have, with some notable exceptions in the late nine-

genth century, assumed a live-and-let-live position. Latter-day Saints in Utah, in turn, generally have been cordial toward Catholics since the pioneer era, when Brigham Young intervened on behalf of Father Edward Kelly to resolve a disputed title to Catholic Church property in Salt Lake City.2

In the quarter-century following World War II, however, relationships between the two churches were seriously strained on several occasions. The story of those strains and their ultimate resolution focuses largely on two church leaders: Duane G. Hunt (1884–1966), bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, and David O. McKay, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

David O. McKay (1873–1970), the older of the two men by over a decade, had long harbored deep personal distrust of Catholicism. While McKay’s exposure to Catholicism had been minimal in Utah, his service from 1923–24 as president of the European Mission placed him for the first time in countries where it was the dominant church. In 1923 he visited Liège, Belgium, and wrote in his diary, “A Catholic Church celebration was held last night [Saturday]–People drinking and carousing until 6:30 this morning. O what a Godless farce that organization is!3

As the presiding officer over the Church’s European missions, he also saw that the most successful proselytizing efforts spanning nearly a century had come from Protestant England, Scandinavia, Germany, and Switzerland, whose thousands of nineteenth-century converts, including his own grandparents, comprised the majority of territorial Utah’s population. In contrast, proselytizing efforts within predominantly Catholic countries had been limited, primarily to France, Belgium, and Italy, and had been generally unsuccessful. Missions to the British Isles (although none were headquartered in Catholic Ireland), Scandinavia, Switzerland, and Germany had

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1 On this general relationship, see Robert Joseph Dwyer, The Gentile


3 David O. McKay, Diary, June 17, 1923, David O. McKay Papers, Ms 668, Box 7, fl. 10, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Hereafter cited as McKay Papers by box and folder, as needed.
operated continuously since their founding between 1837 and 1854, while those to France, Belgium, and Italy, opened in 1850, were closed within fourteen years and were not reopened until the twentieth century.1

In contrast to McKay, a lifelong Latter-day Saint, Duane G. Hunt (1884–1960) had been raised a Methodist but left the church of his youth following college and converted to Catholicism. Nonetheless, he never forgot or disparaged his Protestant background and always maintained sympathetic feelings for other churches. Following law school at the University of Iowa, Hunt moved to Utah in 1913, spent three years on the Speech Department’s faculty at the University of Utah, then decided to enter the ministry. After graduating from St. Patrick’s Seminary in Menlo Park, California, he returned to Utah where, on June 27, 1920, he was ordained by Bishop Joseph S. Glass in the first ordination held in the Cathedral of Madeleine in Salt Lake City. Hunt spent the remaining forty years of his life in Salt Lake City, becoming the fifth bishop of Salt Lake City in 1937.5

In 1930, the centenary of the founding of Mormonism, the Catholics leased airtime on Sunday evenings on KSL, the Mormon Church-owned radio station, for a series of addresses by Bishop Hunt to expound the faith of the Catholic minority. While not intended either as an assault on Mormonism or an attempt to lure Mormons to the Catholic fold, Hunt’s addresses were not well received in some Mormon quarters. Nonetheless, the Catholics took the criticism in stride, reporting that the Mormons “have done a good deal of anti-Catholic talking over the radio in recent months, but on the whole they are less intolerant than strongly Protestant communities.”6

The first crisis in Catholic-Mormon relations during Bishop Hunt’s tenure was precipitated by Father Robert J. Dwyer

3Millard F. Everett, “Centenary of Mormonism Coincides with Successful Catholic Radio Work in Utah,” Intermountain Catholic Register, August 30, 1930.

McKay (Brodie’s uncle), later in a negative book review published in the Improvement Era by Apostle John A. Widtsoe, and finally during April general conference 1946. In the very last session of the conference, several speakers referred to the book, including Apostle Albert E. Bowen, who “made a stirring defense of the Prophet Joseph Smith against the poisonous slander of those who would make him out an imposter.”

Looking on from the sidelines, it appeared to Father Dwyer that the depth of Brodie’s research and the reasonableness of her interpretations threatened to open up a significant crack between Mormon intellectuals, who would likely find the book convincing, and the rank and file, who were now being lectured into faithfulness by the leaders. Of particular interest to Dwyer was the conference address of J. Reuben Clark, who enumerated ten “false doctrines” that he implied were contained in Brodie’s book, without naming her directly. Among those doctrines were skepticism about an anthropomorphic God, the supernatural revelations of Joseph Smith, divine assistance in translating the Book of Mormon, and the idea of eternal progress.

What most caught Dwyer’s eye was the apparent unwillingness of Mormon officials to entertain any kind of critical examination of Mormon history and scriptures, and its decision instead to insist upon nothing less than rock-solid and literal affirmation of received truth. “Higher education,” he observed in his Intermountain Catholic column, “has not proved an unmixed blessing so far as adherence to simple faith in the sacred writings of the Church is concerned.” Obviously hoping to widen that crack between Mormon officials and intellectuals, Dwyer examined some of the central Mormon doctrines showcased by Brodie’s book, which he deemed to be among Mormonism’s most vulnerable.


10Robert J. Dwyer, “Reflections on the Recent LDS Conference,” The Register: Intermountain Catholic Edition, April 21, 1946, 11–12. We have seen no evidence that Dwyer had Mormon intellectual friends; rather, he saw his role more as that of a gadfly.

vancement of genuine religion in a world that needs it so sorely, should be deflected into this backwater of ineffectual controversy and spend their undoubted energies in creating a tempest in a teapot.”

The Mormon response in the Deseret News began by nibbling around the edges of Dwyer’s indictment, pointing out such minor errors as referring to the annual conference as “semiannual” (technically, the April conference was “annual” and its October counterpart was “semiannual”), and criticizing Dwyer’s article as “lack[ing] a bit in . . . ecclesiastical courtesy” by referring to President J. Reuben Clark as “Mr. Clark” or “Reuben Clark.” More to the point, the response indicated that the rise of heresy in any church is likely to cause “consternation” and that any time a church encourages higher education it is likely to encounter skepticism. Regarding Mormonism’s “philosophical impossibility,” the writer asserted an essential incompatibility of religion and philosophy, so that most religious doctrines seem impossible to the secular mind, and most miraculous interventions in human affairs, like Moses’s reception of the Ten Commandments, elude critical evaluation. Finally, the writer asserted that, to the rest of the religious world, the Catholic attention to transubstantiation, confession, relics, and such things appear as futile as Mormons’ concern over their own unique doctrines.

The Salt Lake Tribune, then edited by John F. Fitzgerald, published an indictment of Dwyer’s article titled “Ill-Timed, Ill-Natured and Very Ill-Advised Criticism of a Christian Conference.” This editorial was both less lengthy and less temperate than the article in the Deseret News. Accusing Dwyer of Pharisaical superiority in condemning another religion, it appealed, rather oddly, to patriotism rather than reason. Its basic point was that, during the time of postwar healing, Americans should stand united in the interest of what it called “the future of the world and the perpetuation of the race” rather than indulging “the narrow opinions of any intolerant egotist or illiberal religionist with a sanctimonious complex.”

Apparently Dwyer accepted the Deseret News response as merely a restatement of Mormon philosophical positions and a further ex-

ample of the kind of doctrinal wagon-circling to which his article had called attention. For he chose not to comment on it further. It was, instead, the Tribune rebuke that aroused his ire. In an Intermountain Catholic editorial, he attacked the “purely negative secularism which holds that all religious controversy . . . is necessarily reprehensible.” In such a secular view, disagreement over politics, economics, sociology, or almost anything else is permissible, but “religion is taboo.” Scoring heavily against his patriotic critic, Dwyer reminded him that freedom of religion had been one of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms, for which the country had recently fought, and argued that “the idea that fraternity should be played up at the cost of playing down honest creedal disagreements” was inimical to “the true advancement of religion in a democracy.”

The rest of the column seemed directed more to the eye of Bishop Hunt, his religious superior, than to a general audience. Although the bishop had enjoined his priests to turn the other cheek in response to attacks on Catholic teachings, he himself, after all, was a vigorous defender of the faith when the occasion presented itself, particularly when Catholic doctrines were attacked by the Mormons. Did editorship of the diocesan newspaper entail the authority for Dwyer to engage in similar polemics? A concomitant question was whether Dwyer had initiated the debate or merely responded to provocation. Ultimately only the bishop could decide the first question, but Dwyer had his own answer to the second.

“Provocation,” he began, “is a relative term.” It included, to his mind, not only instances of specific attack, but also long-term promulgation of offensive ideas, either of which could justify rejoinder. “Open denial of the divinity of Christ is provocative to the Christian; not less so is the frank avowal of doctrines concerning the nature of the Godhead which are viewed as irreconcilable with the Christian revelation,” Dwyer continued. Although he concluded with an apology to any persons he may have offended, or if he had “allowed acerbity to sharpen his comments,” it is hard not to regard his words as disingenuous. For one thing, there seems little reason to regard the doctrinal wagon-circling of the Mormon conference as anything but an

14“Ill-Timed, Ill-Natured, and Very Ill-Advised.”

attempt to answer heresy within the ranks of the Latter-day Saints, not a renewed attack on Catholic doctrines. Further, Dwyer's stretching of the elastic clause he thought he could find in the semantics of provocation was nothing less than carte blanche to attack Mormonism whenever he chose and meant nothing less than the onset of the kind of warfare between Catholics and Mormons that had plagued much of Protestant-Mormon relations and which Bishop Hunt had been at pains to avoid. Finally, it would be difficult not to see acerbity in the tone of his initial comments on the conference. "Conternation" there was aplenty among the conference speakers, but Dwyer was well aware that Brodie, for the moment at least, had them down. Thus, he had shown himself as not above adding a kick or two of his own.

Dwyer concluded his article by expressing his willingness "to take his chance with the considered judgment of time and posterity." Postcerity, to this point at least, has rendered the silent judgment of amnesia, but Bishop Hunt took little time to render his: On December 1, 1946, Dwyer's name silently disappeared from the masthead of the diocesan paper, and it would be almost four years before it reappeared. There was an immense love and a deep respect between the two men, apparent to those who knew them and lingering in their reputations; but the amicable relations between the two churches, now rendered fragile, needed protection; and for the moment, Dwyer's services were otherwise used as rector of the cathedral and as a teacher at Judge Memorial High School.

The next crisis in Catholic-Mormon relations occurred only a few months later. In January 1948, J. Reuben Clark, first counselor to LDS Church president George Albert Smith and de facto president due to Smith's failing health, began a series of Sunday night radio addresses on KSL Radio, in which he affirmed the core tenets of Mormon doctrine. At the same time, in a commendable gesture, the station made Sunday night airtime available gratis to Bishop Hunt. Hunt did what Clark did, reaffirming the core beliefs of his own church. Clark, however, misinterpreted Hunt's addresses on the primacy of the Pope and the Holy See in Rome as an assault on Mormonism, and wrote in his diary, "Bishop Hunt seemed to have declared war."

But it was Clark who waged the war. Speaking to his Catholic friend John F. Fitzpatrick, publisher of the Salt Lake Tribune, he asked a rhetorical question: "What might be the situation if we went to Rome and applied for time over the Vatican station and they gave us the time for nothing... and then we proceeded to lambast the Catholic Church over their own station on the time which they had given us?"

The printed texts of Hunt's radio addresses, however, belie Clark's charges. While he sometimes addressed doctrines over which Mormons and Catholics disagree, like the apostolic continuity of the Catholic Church, he did so in the context of sermons on basic Catholic teachings, never as an isolated jab at Mormonism and never with any reference to Mormon teachings at all. Thus, one can appreciate Hunt's genuine astonishment when Fitzpatrick reported Clark's indictment: "Oh, God forbid. Do you mean that?"

When Fitzpatrick assured Clark that he had misread Hunt's intentions, Clark, unimpressed, did not change his view that Hunt had, indeed, declared theological war upon the Mormons. By early March, Clark was shaping his own radio addresses to include direct attacks on core Catholic beliefs. He also began to write an anti-Catholic polemic that he included as a 220-page appendix in a book containing the radio addresses, which was published the following year. He also made no secret of his antagonism toward the Catholic Church. A minor incident became, in his eyes, an occasion of offense. While KSL was doing some remodeling, Monsignor Jerome Stoffel, who occasionally substituted for Hunt in giving the radio addresses, was moved from the cramped studio that Hunt normally used to the spacious one used by Clark. After giving one address, he left the studio just as Clark was entering it to give his own address. Clark did not greet him, but instead glowered at him as if to say, "What in the hell


17 Ibid. No answer from Fitzpatrick is recorded.

18 Transcripts of Hunt's radio addresses are in the Archives, Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City.

19 Hunt quoted in Clark, Office Diary, March 2, 1948, quoted in Quinn, Elder Statesman, 121.

are you doing in my studio?"  

The seventy-five-year-old McKay was, at this time, second counselor in the First Presidency, and thus subordinate to Clark. Though not yet directly involved in the Clark-Hunt dispute, he clearly sided with Clark. After meeting with a group of stake presidents in Ogden early in 1949, he wrote, "Another question that came up was the seeming determination of the Catholics to convert as many Mormons here in the West as they possibly can. There is no doubt but that there is an organized campaign on in this respect." Only two weeks later, he came into direct contact with Bishop Hunt over another matter, and its affable resolution was typical of McKay’s mixed feelings of genuine benevolence and cooperation toward individual Catholics, whether laity or clergy, but distrust and even animosity toward the church to which they belonged.

At issue was an editorial in the Salt Lake Tribune pertaining to the high divorce rate in Utah. A Mormon friend of McKay, disturbed over the editorial, felt that it was unfairly—albeit only indirectly—critical of the LDS Church. He voiced his concerns to Hunt who, feeling somehow implicated in the editorial, called McKay to clarify the situation. McKay assured him that he did not share his friend’s feeling and affirmed that he felt the newspaper had the right to publish any facts and “to comment on anything that is News.” Appreciative of the response, “Bishop Hunt then said he thought anything like this comes up that it is better to get in touch directly; that he did not want any misunderstanding.”

In spite of the good personal feelings resulting from that exchange, McKay took aim at Hunt’s institution several months later. While meeting with local LDS leaders in Idaho, “I admonished them to be on their guard against the attempted inroads of the Catholic Church.” One month later a pamphlet written for Utah Catholics and intended to raise money for under-funded Utah parishes inadvertently caused a skirmish that escalated nearly into theological warfare.

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22 McKay, Diary. February 19, 1949, McKay Papers.
23 Ibid. March 2, 1949.
26 McKay, Diary, August 28, 1949.
has apparently aroused some resentment among our neighbors. . . . There is absolutely no reason why anyone of any other church should pay the slightest bit of attention to this pamphlet. It contains not one iota of propaganda against any one else; it does not complain about any one else. It calls attention to a few priests in this Diocese who need financial assistance and of some of our poor missions. It was sent to Catholics only. . . . That anyone should be disturbed about this pamphlet of Bishop Steck's is wholly unreasonable. It makes me furious. Some day our Mormon neighbors will wake up to the fact that my regime represents the high point in the effort of the Catholic Church to be cordial. . . . To all of [our Utah priests] I give the same advice. "Never criticize any other church or its people; confine yourself exclusively to the Catholic religion." I have forbidden priests to reply to attacks made against us on the radio by prominent Mormons. I have forbidden them to reply to the contemptible attacks made in [LDS] ward meeting houses by ex-Catholics. I have forbidden comments about several books published about us during recent years. I have done everything possible to contribute to harmony. . . . Some day I will discuss the whole subject with you, but not at present. I am too angry. I must wait until I have cooled off. 27

Things then went from bad to worse. Under direction from McKay and his colleagues in the First Presidency, 28 Apostle Mark E. Petersen, who was also editor of the LDS Church-owned Deseret News, initiated a series of meetings with local LDS Church leaders throughout the Salt Lake Valley. Petersen asserted that "a powerful church is mustering all possible strength from all over America for an intensified and concentrated attack on us." 29 Leaving no doubt about the identity of that church, he charged:

About six years ago the authorities of the [LDS] church began to hear of Catholic movements in the east to raise funds for carrying on a campaign in Utah. . . . Bishop D. G. Hunt of the Salt Lake diocese had

29 McKay's admission that he was authorizing a "counterattack" is in the Hunt Collection, Archives, Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City. No evidence exists about who reported to Hunt on the ward meetings where Petersen spoke.
30 Minutes of a meeting held in the Harvard Ward Chapel, September 22, 1949, Hunt Papers.
31 McKay, Diary, October 7, 1949.
and that I, as the Bishop, am doing nothing in retaliation, and I am not doing anything, and I do not propose to do anything. Whenever an article was about to appear, I have telephoned them to stop it, if I have known about it. ... There is a feeling throughout the United States (this is from our side now) that the Latter-day Saints are persecuting the Catholics and are going to drive them out of the city, and they blame me for doing nothing about it.

McKay indicated with some skepticism that "we understand that he [Steck] is especially skilled in missionary work, and that is why he has been sent to Utah." Hunt replied, "No, he isn't a missionary; that is not his work."32 Still the meeting ended amicably and Hunt followed up with a personal letter to McKay, in which he sought to clarify the matter further:

The attitude of the Catholic Church in Utah toward other Churches during this year has been and is precisely what it was last year and what it has always been. Our primary objective here as elsewhere is to safeguard the faith of our people and to administer the Sacraments to them. A secondary objective is to win converts. These come into the Church because they are attracted by some doctrine or devotion, never as the result of a direct approach by a priest, and never as the result of an attack upon the religion of their youth. We preach our doctrines openly so that those who are interested may hear. We give out literature explanatory [of] our doctrines to those who ask for it. Such have been our methods in the past; such are our methods now. In other words and in summary, the disturbing pamphlet has not meant any change in our program or policies. In no way was it intended to affect our attitude toward Protestants and Mormons or our relations with them. It was intended merely as the means of raising additional revenue for a few of our priests whose people cannot fully support them.33

Finally satisfied, McKay responded more warmly:

I am glad that I accepted your cordial invitation to have a personal conference with you on the question of the purpose of your having issued this objectionable pamphlet. ... As I have already stated to you, when the leaders of the Church first read this appeal

32McKay, Diary, October 12, 1949.

they understood it to be the opening of a campaign in Utah to convert to Catholicism, members of the dominant church. ... With this thought in mind, we took immediate steps to inform our people of what appeared to be an approaching campaign planned by the Catholics for the specific purpose named above. Your letter sets forth conclusively that there was no such intent, that there has been "no attack upon others," nor "any change in policies" of the Catholic Church here in Utah. Thank you for setting forth so clearly your attitude in this matter.34

In retrospect, it seems clear that McKay and his colleagues badly and unfairly misinterpreted the pamphlet and subsequently took unwarranted and damaging action in retaliation. Hunt was justified in his initial feelings and showed commendable integrity and charity in initiating the healing process. McKay accepted Hunt's explanation, but with obvious reluctance. A double standard was in effect, but never entered into the discussion. That is, McKay and his colleagues were vehemently opposed to any attempt by the Catholics to proselytize within Utah, yet made no apology about sending thousands of LDS missionaries to Catholic strongholds within the United States and foreign countries, with the expressed intent of converting Catholics to Mormonism. Ultimately, McKay did exactly what he had hypothesized to Hunt, taking Mormonism to the gates of the Vatican when he reopened the Italian Mission after a hiatus of a full century.35

However, the Mormon-Catholic entente cordiale constructed by Hunt and McKay held firm for several years. Shortly after McKay became Church president, he visited Holy Cross Hospital to perform a blessing of healing for a young LDS patient afflicted with polio. As he entered the building, he encountered Bishop Hunt, who greeted him cordially and introduced him to the Sister Superior.36 A year later, Hunt wrote a letter with directions that it be read at Sunday Mass in every parish in the diocese. The letter touched delicately on Catholic-Mormon relationships and urged Catholics to be good neighbors under all circumstances:

36McKay, Diary, December 16, 1951.
You yourselves, precisely because you are Catholics, are often discriminated against. Accept such injustice uncomplainingly. I beg you, as the price to be paid for the true faith. It so happens that you are frequently approached by the zealous representatives of other churches who wish to win you over to their doctrines. For your guidance, I hereby give you a few directions. Never deny your faith. Never apologize for it. State frankly that you are Catholics. Be proud that you belong to the greatest institution in the world, the one Church that goes back to Christ, the one Church that is truly universal. Do not condemn or attack other religions. What they teach is none of our business. Leave them alone. Be good neighbors always. Be kind, considerate, and unselfish. Obey the Ten Commandments and the precepts of the Church. Love God and neighbor. Keep your minds and hearts free from the bitterness of religious controversies.

Several months later in February 1953, McKay paid a high compliment to Hunt in speaking to local LDS leaders in Ogden:

I shall always respect Bishop Hunt and what he did the other day. Before I went to California, he asked for an appointment, came to the office, and said, “Frankly, we are contemplating building a high school up in Ogden. . . . I understand that if Weber College vacates the buildings on that block, some of them come back to you, but I think that this one is not included. I am here for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not you want that building. If you do, we will withdraw.” . . . Without hesitation, I said, “We want it.” He said, “Then we will withdraw.”

The following year, McKay visited Brazil, with the largest Catholic population in the western hemisphere. While in Rio de Janeiro, he walked up the hill of Corcovado, to the magnificent statue of Christ, “Cristo Redentor,” that overlooks the city. “When he got up there and saw the statue with the arms outspread, he recited that verse, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’

Then he said, ‘These people who have done this are spiritual.’

Nonetheless, occasional statements in private settings indicated that McKay still drew a distinction between Catholics, who in many cases were close friends, and the Church to which they belonged, which he continued to disdain. In 1953 he visited San Mateo, California, to dedicate a new LDS chapel. As he and his host drove past a Catholic Church whose congregation was exiting after Sunday Mass, he said, “There are two great anti-Christians in the world: Communism and that church,” pointing to the Catholic Church. “Then,” recounted his host, “he put his hand on my knee and said, ‘Remember that.’”

The following year, an advertisement appeared in the Wall Street Journal, soliciting funds for the construction of a new abbey at the Catholic monastery in Huntsville. The monastery had been founded in 1947 by the Trappist Order, which had selected the property because its isolated rural setting favored the monastic lifestyle. The fact that Huntsville was McKay’s hometown was unrelated, and the monastery never engaged in proselytizing. Still, McKay interpreted the fund-raising campaign for the abbey as part of “their campaign to convert Latter-day Saints.” Speaking at a meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, he reiterated his statement of a year earlier:

It is more apparent than ever, becoming more apparent each day, that two great organized forces, the purpose of which is to undermine the high principles of the Restored Gospel, are operating. One is Communism, which is moving aggressively over the face of the earth, fundamentally prompted by disbelief in the existence of God, a rejection of the life of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, and is against the Church. The other is the Catholic Church, which is showing more clearly than ever before that they are determined to counteract the influence of the Church in this western country.

At the same time he was maintaining a critical attitude toward Catholicism, McKay continued to look favorably upon other

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37 Hunt, undated circular letter, “My dear People,” Hunt Papers. A handwritten note at the top of the letter by Bernice Mooney, former archivist of the diocese, indicated that the letter was read in all parishes between September and November 1952.

38 McKay, Diary, February 28, 1953.

39 Asael Sorensen, interviewed by Gregory A. Prince, November 18, 2000. Sorensen was then president of the Brazilian Mission.

40 David B. Haight, interviewed by Gregory A. Prince, May 21, 1996. Several years after McKay’s death, Haight was called to serve as an apostle.

41 McKay, Diary, June 9, 1954.
churches. Within weeks of establishing a policy discouraging LDS girls from wearing crosses because "this was a Catholic form of worship," McKay received a gift of a "Chrisma" charm, which combined the Byzantine Cross with the Star of David to symbolize "the essential unity of the world's great faiths." The same day, "I took the charm down to my son, owner and manager of the McKay Jewelry Shop and asked him to attach a pin to the charm so that I can wear it on my lapel when I so desire." McKay quickly assigned Mark E. Petersen and Marion G. Romney, both senior apostles, to review the book for accuracy and to report their findings to him. In addition to their oral reports, Petersen also submitted a written report listing 1,067 errors affecting "most of the 776 pages of the book." Among their criticisms, and of greatest concern to others, was McConkie's treatment of Catholicism. The dictionary-style definition under the heading "Catholicism" read "See Church of the Devil," and under "Church of the Devil," he minced no words: "The Roman Catholic Church specifically—singled out, set apart, described, and designated as being 'most abominable above all other churches.' In support of his allegation, he cited a passage from the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 13:5). It does not name Roman Catholicism—understandably since the writer, Nephi, left Jerusalem in 600 B.C.—but earlier LDS leaders going back to the LDS Church's founding had hesitated to make the connection. None, however, had done so as bluntly as McConkie, and the instant popularity of his book meant that the insult to Catholics rapidly became a high-profile issue.

Bishop Duane Hunt, having enjoyed several years of peace with his Mormon neighbors, was stunned. Immediately after the 1958 general election in November, he paid a courtesy visit to newly elected Congressman David King to congratulate him on his victory, yet the experience was bittersweet for both men. Hunt carried a copy of McConkie's book; and with tears in his eyes, he said to King, a devout Mormon, "We are your friends. We don't deserve this kind of treatment!" Hunt also took the matter directly to McKay. Robert L. Simpson, who learned about the episode when he became a General Authority in 1961, reminisced, "I know the Catholic Bishop at the

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42 McKay, Diary, April 29, 1957.
43 McKay, Diary, May 20, 1957.
44 McKay, Diary, October 2, 1957.
45 McKay, Diary, October 10, 1957.
46 Smith, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, succeeded McKay as Church president in 1970. He told McKay that he "did not know anything about it until it was published." McKay, Diary, January 7, 1960.
47 McKay, Diary, February 6, 1959.
49 Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), 108, 129.
time had a real affection for President McKay, no question about it. And President McKay had a feeling for him, and even went so far as to have Brother McConkie change a line or two in his Mormon Doctrine book that would have seemed a little harsh on the Catholic Church at the time.

McKay's son Lawrence was even more direct in describing his father's reaction to Hunt. "[Bishop Hunt] called Father and said, 'This the attitude of the Church, that the Catholic Church is the 'Great and Abominable Church,' as expressed in this latest book of Bruce McConkie's?' That book was taken off the shelves." Unfortunately, neither Hunt nor McKay left a written record of their conversation.

In the aftermath of the enormous embarrassment caused to the Church and to himself by McConkie's book, McKay quietly abandoned his private criticism of Catholicism for the remaining decade of his life. He had come to realize that Bishop Hunt was a true friend without a hidden agenda, and he valued that friendship greatly. In a note to Hunt following the funeral of McKay's counselor, Stephen L. Richards, McKay wrote: "When, from the rostrum I saw you and my esteemed friend, John F. Fitzpatrick, sitting in the audience, paying tribute of respect to my departed friend and associate, Stephen L. Richards, I wanted to shake your hands in personal appreciation. Thank you for your attendance at Stephen L.'s funeral rites."

In addition to coming to terms with Hunt, McKay realized that the Catholic Church was not a threat to the LDS Church in Utah nor, for that matter, to the vitality of international Mormonism, whose emergence was the centerpiece of McKay's entire ministry as Church president. Conversely, despite occasional skirmishes at a local level and successful LDS proselytizing among Catholics, particularly in Latin America, Mormonism never posed a strategic threat to Catholicism. Indeed, in recent years the two churches have formally joined forces on occasion to pursue moral issues within the political arena and, more frequently, to work together on charitable ventures.

Less than a year after the death of Stephen L. Richards, as McKay and his fellow General Authorities were leaving the Salt Lake Temple following a meeting, they were saddened to hear the news of the seventy-six-year-old Hunt's death. McKay prepared a statement for the local newspapers that conveyed genuine respect for Hunt, and grief at his passing: "We are deeply grieved at the sudden passing of this eminent and devoted leader of the many loyal and law-abiding members of the Catholic Church of the diocese of Salt Lake City. He gave to them the spiritual guidance that helped them to shape their lives in accordance with the teachings of his Church. They have lost a trusted and respected adviser."

Beyond the words of written tribute, McKay paid unprecedented respect to Hunt by attending his funeral mass at the Cathedral of the Madeleine. It was the first high mass McKay had ever attended. "At the conclusion of the funeral services at 12 noon, the new Bishop, The Most Rev. Joseph Lennox Federal, came out on the steps of the Cathedral to greet President [Henry D.] Moyle and me, and to thank us for coming to the services. I was very favorably impressed with him. Federal, in turn, was very favorably impressed with McKay. A decade later he reciprocated the gesture by attending McKay's funeral. Then, as the cortege passed the Cathedral of the Madeleine on its slow, sad journey along South Temple Street to the Salt Lake City Cemetery, he ordered the bells tolled in a final demonstration of respect.

Hunt himself left no record of this incident or of his subsequent meeting with McKay. King apparently took no action as a result of this incident.

52 David Lawrence McKay, interviewed by Gordon Irving, March 30, 1984, Ms 200 734, James H. Moyle Oral History Project, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives). He was mistaken, however, about the book's being withdrawn. Instead the first edition was allowed to sell out.
50 David O. McKay, Letter to Duane G. Hunt, June 1, 1959, photocopy in McKay, Scrapbook #44. McKay had stopped making disparaging remarks about Catholicism even before he received the report on Mormon Doctrine.

54 McKay, Diary, March 31, 1960.
55 McKay, Diary, April 5, 1960.