The Journey Home: A Root-metaphor Analysis of the 1840 Mormon Manchester Hymn Book

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Abstract
In 1840, apostle missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints compiled, printed, and began distributing a hymnbook that eventually would become the basis for all subsequent LDS hymnbooks published in English in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This thesis, as a contribution to the literature of communication, book history, and hymnology, as well as the intellectual and cultural history of the early years of the LDS Church, focuses on analyzing the poetry of the 1840 Mormon Manchester hymnbook. Using qualitative root-metaphor analysis, the author identified and analyzed expressions, supporting an emergent journey root-metaphor. He then divided the expressions into eight categories, each describing important and distinct aspects of the Journey. These categories include the following: 1) the travelers, 2) the activities on the journey, 3) the way, 4) the destination, 5) the guide, 6) the invitation to come, 7) the motivations, and 8) the lost wanderers. This thesis is based on the assumption that cultures and religions can be understood through the stories they tell. The story of the journey as told through the poetry of the 1840 Manchester hymnbook illuminates one aspect of the religious experience of early members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Taken together, the eight aspects of the journey root-metaphor identified in this thesis tell a story about LDS members as travelers on a journey home, who walk on a straight and narrow path, away from a dark and fallen world, through snares, darkness, and other dangers, toward a glorious destination where rest, joy, and other rewards await them. Ultimately the travelers must rise above this world and follow Christ to a place where they may live with God to serve and praise him ever more.

Degree
MA

College and Department
Fine Arts and Communications; Communications

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BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Date Submitted
2006-02-22

Document Type
Thesis

Handle
http://hdl.lib.byu.edu/1877/etd1177

Keywords
1840, apostle, missionary, missionaries, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hymnbook, book history, hymnology, poetry, qualitative, root-metaphor analysis, journey, travelers, activities, way, destination, guide, invitation to come, motivations, lost wanderers, story, stories, religious experience, LDS, Mormon

Language
English
A root metaphor is one which is so embedded within a language or culture that it is often not realized as being a metaphor. Another definition of a root metaphor is one from which other metaphors spring. Unrealized metaphors can be constraining in the thinking and action that it spawns. This can be hazardous, for example where the metaphor of ‘argument as war’ pushes us towards the idea that a good argument is one where the other person is beaten into submission through aggressive action. ‘Time as money’ makes us think about how we ‘spend’ time and how we should be ‘economic’ with it. For example one culture may have a root metaphor of life as a journey, whilst another may see it as opportunity. See also. Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980).