

*Cathedral Building in America:  
A Missionary Cathedral in Utah*  
By the Very Reverend Gary Kriss, D.D.

I

“THERE IS NO fixed type yet of the American cathedral.”<sup>1</sup> Bishop Daniel S. Tuttle’s comment in 1906 remains true today as an assessment of the progress of the cathedral movement in the Episcopal Church. In organization, mission, and architecture, American cathedrals represent a kaleidoscope of styles quite unlike the settled cathedral system which is found in England. It may fairly be said that, in the development of the Episcopal Church, cathedrals were an afterthought. The first cathedrals appear on the scene in the early 1860s, more than two hundred fifty years after Anglicans established their first parish on American soil. So far removed from the experience of English cathedral life, it is remarkable that cathedrals emerged at all—unless it might be suggested that by the very nature of episcopacy, cathedrals are integral to it.

“I think no Episcopate complete that has not a center, the cathedral, as well as a circumference, the Diocese.”<sup>2</sup> The year was 1869. William Crosswell Doane, first Bishop of Albany, New York, was setting forth his vision for his Diocese. Just two years earlier, Bishop Tuttle had set out from his parish in Morris, New York, (which, coincidentally, was in that section of New York State which became part of the new Diocese of Albany in 1868) to begin his work as Missionary Bishop of Montana with Idaho and Utah. In 1869, Bishop Tuttle established his permanent home in Salt Lake City, and within two years, quite without any conscious purpose or design on his part, he had a cathedral. Doane had a pro-cathedral by 1872.

Bishops Tuttle and Doane represent two quite different types, one a missionary to new settlements on a still dangerous and largely non-Christian frontier, the other equally energetic but addressing himself to an

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel S. Tuttle, *Reminiscences of a Missionary Bishop*, (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1906), 382.

<sup>2</sup> George E. DeMille, *Pioneer Cathedral*, (Albany: Privately printed, 1967), 8.

established church in an established culture. Nevertheless, both had cathedrals very nearly from the beginning of their episcopates. Those cathedrals came into being in very different ways and differed markedly in their constitutions, but Doane's vision gets at the heart of what Albany church historian George DeMille has called the "cathedral idea,"<sup>3</sup> and in that the nearly simultaneous founding of the cathedrals of Salt Lake City and Albany represents a significant moment in the cathedral building movement.

In a church fond of dignified ceremony, the conventional notion of a cathedral as a great gothic pile full of colorful decoration and with room for dramatic movement is very appealing. But these notions are inadequate expressions of the "cathedral idea." To begin to understand cathedrals, we must look further back in time, to the early centuries of the Christian church.

As Christianity spread from town to town, church order as we now know it took shape slowly. We know from Scripture and the writings of the earliest Fathers of the Church that in each town a local leader (*episcopos*: bishop) was set apart by prayer and the laying on of hands as chief pastor, teacher, and minister of the sacraments. At first, of course, the believers met in homes, or, in times of persecution, in secret places such as the catacombs of Rome. When formal places of assembly began to appear, particularly after the official recognition and establishment of Christianity in the fourth century, the Church began to use public buildings or buildings patterned after the typical public buildings of the day—basilicas.<sup>4</sup>

A basilica had one fixed piece of furniture: a chair (in Latin: *cathedra*). In government buildings, this chair would be used by the king (in Greek: *basileus*) or other person in authority, a consul or judge, for instance. From this throne he would preside over public meetings. A basilica might also house a school or schools. Unlike our modern schools, ancient schools provided a chair for the teacher—students sat on the floor, "at the feet" of the teacher. In some places the Jewish synagogue also

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that Christians did not, at first, use or imitate the cultic buildings of paganism which were generally merely shrines housing a cult statue and not places of gathering, at all.

served as a model for Christian churches, but the Church was generally quite Hellenized by the time regular church buildings were established and even in Palestine the earliest known church buildings follow the basilican form. In any case, in synagogues the chair of the teacher, on a raised bema, is again the one fixed piece of furniture.<sup>5</sup>

From the earliest times, the essential elements of Christian worship are clear. In Acts 2:42 we are told that “they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” From this, we see that, in addition to the *cathedra*, one further piece of furniture is necessary for Christian worship: a table. To be sure, other useful items were added in time, but two only were necessary: the chair of the presider/teacher and the holy table, or altar. These two reflect the basic structure of worship: the Liturgy of the Word, presided over by the successor of the apostles from his chair, and the Liturgy of the Table.

Sunday by Sunday, from town to town, the whole body of believers in a town or city gathered around their local bishop. Ignatius of Antioch, writing at the beginning of the second century, expresses the Church’s developing sense of the place of the bishop in its life: “Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is celebrated by the bishop, or by one whom he appoints. Wherever the bishop appears let the congregation be present; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”<sup>6</sup> The bishop stands at the center of church life, and in the early church he presided over the single Eucharist of the community.

In time, however, the church grew and in the larger towns and cities it was no longer possible for the whole community to gather in one place for the Eucharist. Ignatius acknowledges that there will be occasions when the bishop will need to delegate the responsibility of presiding at the Eucharist. Earlier, as we read in Acts, the Order of Deacons had developed out of a need for the apostles to delegate certain pastoral and administrative cares so that they could “devote themselves to prayer and to

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<sup>5</sup> Modern experience might lead us to expect that a synagogue would have a permanent piece of furniture in which the sacred scrolls were kept, but there is archaeological evidence that this was not the case. For example, a frieze in the impressive fourth century synagogue at Capernaum depicts an elaborate ark on wheels, presumably kept in storage and rolled out only when needed.

<sup>6</sup> Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans VIII, Kirsopp Lake, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers*, I, Loeb Classical Library. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

the ministry of the word.”<sup>7</sup> In the latter decades of the first century, a council or Order of Presbyters (elders) had gathered around the bishop, and it was to members of this group that the bishop began to delegate the responsibilities of teaching and presiding at the Eucharist. Places of assembly multiplied, but there was still only one bishop and, although he visited every church in his city or district, he retained one particular church as his home church. In that church he maintained his official seat—his *cathedra*.

By the high middle ages in Europe, the cathedral system had developed into an elaborate organization. In early times, the bishop’s residence would quite naturally be close by his cathedral church. As the practice of clerical celibacy became more and more widespread, the bishop’s home became something like a small monastery where the bishop’s staff of deacons, presbyters, and lay servants lived with the bishop in community. In England in the middle ages, approximately half of the cathedrals were full-fledged monastic foundations where the bishop also served as abbot. The others also had a distinctly monastic air about them for every member of the household was expected to live under a rule of life. The Greek word for rule is *kanon*, from which is derived the English word “canon,” the technical term for church law and also the title of certain clergy attached to cathedrals.

Surrounded by monks or canons, the bishop was the head of a considerable household which supported him in his work. This became increasingly important as the church extended out of the towns and cities into the country. Bishops were often on the road, visiting their many parishes. As the bishop could not be present to oversee the day to day life of his cathedral, the management of cathedral affairs passed into the hands of the resident community. Where this was a monastery, the prior became the resident head. When it was not a monastery, the leadership was organized into a college, or chapter, of canons, having at its head a dean (deriving from the Latin word *decanus* signifying the leader of a group of ten, i.e. a small group). In time, the chapter developed its own internal hierarchy which survives in English cathedrals to this day—and has been imitated in some American cathedrals.

From this brief summary of the origins of cathedrals, we may infer

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<sup>7</sup> Acts 6:4.

one thing in particular about cathedrals: they are at the center of the ministry of the bishop. From this, it is not too great a step to assert that cathedrals are integral to episcopacy. On the one hand, a cathedral is, as the bishop's church, the primary church of a diocese, the place where his ministry of teaching and administering the sacraments is, quite literally, at home. On the other hand, the cathedral is the tangible sign of the central ministry of the bishop when he is not present, when he is out in the diocese. Whether house church, basilica, or gothic pile, the bishop's church houses his *cathedra* and that is what makes it a cathedral. Whether governed by monastic chapter, dean and chapter, or rector, wardens and vestry, the cathedral is ultimately the bishop's church and, thus, the church of all the people of the diocese.

More can, and should, be said about the nature of cathedrals. A cathedral is not merely a roof over an official chair, nor is it a static symbol. Cathedrals are dynamic institutions. In his admiration for Bishop Doane and the cathedral he founded, DeMille misses the mark in attempting to define what a cathedral is. He writes:

...Technically, of course, the cathedral of a diocese is simply the church where the bishop has fixed his episcopal seat. It may be, often is, a city parish, but it might be the tiniest chapel in a country village. This is the strict and legal sense of the term.

Actually, of course, the word means in common parlance much more than that. The word has overtones. The minute the word "cathedral" is mentioned, it calls up in the mind of the hearer a whole congeries of ideas and associations. Mentally, the hearer sees at once Canterbury and York, Chartres and Cologne—magnificent buildings, the glory of their times. The word implies a stately worship, dignified by beautiful music and some elaboration of ceremonial; and this worship is a daily business. It calls to mind a hierarchy—a staff of dean and canons, specialists in their several fields, whose influence radiates from the cathedral out to the extremes of the diocese. All these things are involved in "the cathedral idea". Albany is America's pioneer cathedral only in virtue of the fact that here the American Episcopal Church first attempted to

carry out all that was included in the association of the word cathedral.<sup>8</sup>

There is truth in what DeMille says, but he confuses the trappings with the substance. Magnificent buildings, stately worship, beautiful music, a hierarchy of staff all may contribute to the effectiveness of a cathedral ministry, but are not essential to it. What is essential may be more clearly inferred from the sermon preached by the Right Reverend Henry Benjamin Whipple, first Bishop of Minnesota, on 16 July 1862, at the laying of the cornerstone of the first cathedral erected in the Episcopal Church.

...This is a Bishop's Church, the centre of a Diocese which I pray GOD may be an Apostolic See.... I count it as a token full of hope that ere we laid the foundation of our Cathedral Church, the work of faith and prayer had knit together of lively stones a fairer temple in the LORD. The day will surely come when here upon the border (it may be when I am dead) there shall be a daughter of an Apostolic Church, with an Apostolic Bishop, with his corps of Apostolic Clergy, in an Apostolic Diocese, with heads and hands busy with Apostolic Work....<sup>9</sup>

Insofar as the trappings contribute to the realization of this ideal, they reinforce that which is essential about the cathedral, namely its *apostolic* mission, which is to say its service as an extension of the ministry of the bishop, whose ministry is only authentic when it is truly apostolic. We will return to this notion of apostolic mission.

## II

The Episcopal Church is an offshoot, a missionary enterprise, of the Church of England. Anglicanism came permanently to America with the first settlers at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Unlike the pilgrims who

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<sup>8</sup>DeMille, 1.

<sup>9</sup>Benjamin Ives Scott and Robert Neslund, *The First Cathedral*, (Faribault, Minnesota: The Cathedral of Our Merciful Saviour, 1987), 25.

emigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Virginia settlers were not dissenters and even brought a Church of England clergyman with them. From the day of their arrival, Anglicanism was here to stay. However, it was a deprived form of Anglicanism: from 1607 until 1784, more than one hundred seventy-five years, there was no bishop in America—no Anglican bishop ever even visited the colonial parishes. The Bishop of London was the nominal bishop of the colonial church. Men who sought ordination had to make the dangerous journey back to England and even Confirmation was unavailable to any save those who might visit the mother country and her insular church.

The impact of this lack of bishops was significant. It meant that, after the War of Independence, when American bishops were finally ordained, they were still viewed by many as remote figures, hardly central to the life of the church. Although the influence of various distinguished bishops had a significant impact on this attitude, it may be argued that a prevailing congregationalism still pervades much of the Episcopal Church which learned to survive quite well in the colonial period without the oversight and teaching and direct sacramental ministry of a bishop. The lack of bishops had another effect: if there is no bishop, there is no need for a special church for him—there is no need for a cathedral. If Anglicans in America had managed well enough without bishops, they certainly did not feel the loss of cathedrals. Even after the Episcopal Church had obtained the episcopate, it would be another seventy-seven years before the first cathedral was established.

And yet, it may be argued that there were in fact cathedrals from the moment the first bishops assumed responsibility for their sees. The first American bishops, Seabury of Connecticut, White of Pennsylvania, Provoost of New York, were also (and often primarily) parish rectors. This was true of most American bishops for many years. No longer permissible under the canons of the Church, this was a necessity in the early years of a numerically and financially poor church struggling to overcome the stigma of its roots in the colonial power.

There is an interesting Postscript in the 1836 edition of William White's *Memoir of the Protestant Episcopal Church*:

On a review of this document, the author judges it not irrelevant, to record some sentiments long entertained

by him, as to arrangements which should be kept in prospect, to be carried into effect when circumstances may permit.

Let there be in a diocese, and in some city or town as central as may be, a church of which the bishop is to be the parochial pastor, and in which he is to preach habitually, when not engaged in visitations. In such a church, the diocesan convention will occupy the standing, and will perform the duties of an ordinary vestry. This will be as near to primitive practice, and to that of the Church of England, as is consistent with the circumstances of our Church....

Bishop White does not speak here of a “cathedral,” nor does he mention the chair (with a mitre carved on the top) which he had in Christ Church, Philadelphia, as early as the 1780s, but he does propose what in other respects must be recognized as a cathedral and he speaks of this idea as one “long entertained by him.”<sup>10</sup>

The first bishop (as far as we know) to *speak* of establishing a cathedral, John Henry Hobart of New York, is buried under the chancel of Trinity Church, which he served as rector throughout his episcopate. Trinity Church is the mother parish of New York City and, for that matter, of much of New York State, supporting the missionary work of its rector/bishop and others as they planted churches throughout the state. George Washington Doane never called St. Mary’s Church, Burlington, New Jersey, a cathedral, but in 1832 he set up a canopied chair in the church he served as rector and called it the “bishop’s chair.” With or without a designated *cathedra*, with or without the official title, were these parish churches not cathedrals, the home of the bishop and the center of his apostolic ministry of word, sacrament, and missionary endeavor?<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> William White, *Memoir of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United State of America* (New York: Swords, Stanford, and Co., 1836), 392-393. White’s chair is now in the Baptistry of All Saints’ Cathedral, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

<sup>11</sup> Though George Washington Doane did not call St. Mary’s a cathedral, others did, including William Henry Odenheimer, the third Bishop of New Jersey, who served briefly as rector of St. Mary’s and later sought an Act of the state Legislature to allow him to record his sacramental and other official acts in the parish register. William H.



We have noted that there *could* be no cathedrals when there were no bishops. We have also seen that there *were* no cathedrals, that is, no places with the formal designation, for seventy-seven years after the consecration of the first bishop for the Episcopal Church. George Washington Doane was not one to avoid controversy, yet something seems to have cautioned him to go slowly with the business of cathedrals. Perhaps it was the strong anti-Roman sentiment of the day; perhaps it was a need to press other more urgent concerns. Significantly, Doane's modest experiment with a "bishop's chair" does not appear to have been repeated until 1863 when William Ingraham Kip set up his bishop's chair in Grace Church, San Francisco, where he was the rector. The church was popularly known as "Grace Cathedral," but that was clearly a provisional arrangement: when Kip became rector of another parish, the chair was taken along and that church was known as the "cathedral." But then, suddenly, in the 1860s, officially designated cathedrals began to appear. Obviously, something had changed.

The spread of the "cathedral idea" and efforts to effect the formal establishment of cathedrals were advanced significantly as a result of the catholic revival. The more familiar manifestation of the catholic revival, the Oxford Movement (Tractarianism) in England, had its roots in an older "high churchmanship," so-called because of the *high* view which its proponents held of the Church. Catholics in the oldest sense of that term, high churchmen understood the Church to be, not merely the collective identity of individual Christians, but an organic whole, the Body of Christ in a sacramental sense, the extension of God's incarnate presence in the world.

High churchmen viewed the ordained ministry as deriving directly from Christ. The leader of the American high churchmen of his day, John Henry Hobart, described the sacraments as "the ordinances of the Church, administered by a priesthood who derive their authority, by regular transmission, from Christ, the divine head of the Church, and the source of

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Stone, "The Cathedral in America," *The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, XIX (December 1950): 326-327. William Crosswell Doane, rector of the parish when the Act was adopted, referred to it as "the Act which makes St. Mary's the Cathedral Church of the Diocese." *Journal of the Diocese of New Jersey, 1861*: 62, quoted in Stone, 327.

all government.”<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, he saw an apostolic episcopate at the center of the life of the Church: “Episcopacy is unchangeable, because it is the originally constituted mode of conveying that commission, without which there can be no visible ministry, no visible sacraments, no visible church.”<sup>13</sup>

Hobart’s death two days short of his fifty-fifth birthday was untimely, but he left behind an immense legacy, including a generation of students influenced by his principles, and prepared to take them further. For the purposes which concern us, three students in particular stand out, all future bishops: the aforementioned George Washington Doane, Jackson Kemper, and William R. Whittingham. These three are mentioned here for their particular contribution to that aspect of the catholic revival and the cathedral idea that is often overlooked: its missionary emphasis. Hobart died on a missionary tour of the western part of the vast Diocese of New York. For him, mission was at the heart of the nature of the Church and he devoted great energy to missions, planting churches across the state and once travelling as far as Wisconsin to visit the Indian missions.

This legacy bore fruit in a particular way in 1835, when the General Convention constituted the Episcopal Church as the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society. In his *Reminiscences*, Bishop Tuttle characterized the significance of this action:

To my mind it was one of the most important steps ever taken in the American Church, when in 1835, under the energetic leadership of the elder Doane, these two truths were set forth and emphasized: First, that the Church is herself the great missionary society, and that every one baptized is therefore a member of the one as of the other. Secondly, that bishops are the proper “missionary” officers, and under bishops, specially and directly, missionary work should be carried on. The operation of the latter principle put Kemper into the field in less than a month after the close of the General Convention....<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> George. E. DeMille, *The Catholic Movement in the American Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, 1941), 11.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Tuttle, 24.

Jackson Kemper became the first Missionary Bishop of the Episcopal Church, and set out almost at once to a see which encompassed an area that would later become the states of Missouri, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Kansas. Twenty-four years later, with his vast missionary district being divided into separate dioceses, Kemper gave up his commission as a Missionary Bishop in order to become the first Bishop of Wisconsin. However, there is something uniquely fitting about the fact that he would be invited to Faribault, Minnesota, by Bishop Whipple to consecrate the first cathedral erected in the Episcopal Church in 1869.

A Missionary Bishop—the concept almost eludes our understanding. In the modern church, the bishop as corporate chief executive officer is the more familiar paradigm. It would be difficult to imagine many late twentieth century bishops on the vast unsettled American frontier, before the advent even of railroads and with the dangers attendant upon the occasional unrest of an uprooted and ill-treated Native American population. Yet, at age 45, Kemper set out, by boat, by wagon, on horseback, and on foot, to plant faith in Jesus Christ in the hearts of those who had determined to make a new life on the frontier. Active missionary endeavor became the hallmark of a new generation of bishops.

Kemper's theater of operations was so vast that even his prodigious spirit recognized that he must have help, and so he turned to the General Theological Seminary, founded in New York under the watchful eye of Bishop Hobart. Visiting the seminary in 1840, Kemper found a ready audience in students who had come under the spell of Whittingham, then Professor of Ecclesiastical History and soon to become Bishop of Maryland. Whittingham was an inspiring teacher whose strong catholic ideas were a major influence in the formation of his students. Several responded to Kemper's invitation and in the end three, James Lloyd Breck, William Adams, and John Henry Hobart, Jr., presented themselves in Wisconsin, where they founded the first Associate Mission in 1841. After a year in Prairie Village (later Waukesha), they moved to land which had been purchased on the Nashotah Lakes, thirty miles west of Milwaukee.

The Associate Mission concept is important in this history for it would become the basis for the founding of an important cathedral—the

first built specifically to be a cathedral. In essence, the Associate Mission was a quasi-monastic house, a religious community without formal vows but with a commitment to community life *under the direct supervision of the bishop*. Breck described the response to Kemper's visit to General in a letter to his brother Charles:

...The following is mooted in our class...that six or eight of us clan together, going out West, place ourselves under Bishop Kemper, all at one point, and there educate and preach; to live under one roof, constituted into a *Religious House*, under a Superior.<sup>15</sup>

The ideal of a religious community was never entirely realized, as the early missionaries did not all find themselves suited to such a life. But the idea continued to capture Breck's imagination and we see the principle recurring in adapted forms in the foundation of new Associate Missions. A particularly important aspect of the concept was the central role which the bishop was to play.

Bishop Kemper devoted a considerable amount of his time and energy to the welfare of the Nashotah Mission and spent a large part of the winter of 1844 living there in the earthen undercroft of the Mission's chapel, perhaps giving it a unique claim to being the bishop's seat and, at least temporarily, a cathedral. In 1847, the bishop purchased an adjacent farm and established his own home and family there, giving the Mission the permanent relationship to its bishop which Breck thought so crucial to the success of their work. Theirs was a vision of an apostolic community, a community of mission with a bishop at its center. In essence, the Associate Mission was a version of the "cathedral idea."

James M. Woolworth, in a study prepared for the Bishop of Nebraska when he was organizing his cathedral, remarks on the parallel between the Associate Mission concept and the minster system by which much of Britain was evangelized. A rural society was not easily evangelized from the few urban centers of ancient Britain. Therefore, religious communities were established at strategic locations. Each community had its church (minster). Some were monasteries from the

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<sup>15</sup> Charles Breck, *The Life of the Reverend James Lloyd Breck, D.D.* (New York: E. & J.B. Young & Co., 1882), 8.

beginning, but those which were not nevertheless lived by a rule and from these communities missionaries went out to the surrounding district.

The Cathedral and the Minster were both missionary establishments, having a considerable number of clergy, who went forth from their common home into the region round about, and generally carrying on the same work in the same way. Their systems differed in this: there was one Cathedral in the diocese, with the Bishop at its head: there were several minsters in one diocese, each with a dean or abbot at its head.<sup>16</sup>

As the church grew in England and dioceses multiplied, minsters were the logical places to locate new episcopal seats, a pattern which would be replicated in the Minnesota Associate Mission.

There the missionaries' vision found its fullest realization when the first Bishop of Minnesota, Henry Benjamin Whipple, decided to locate his permanent seat at the site of the Associate Mission in Faribault. Breck left Nashotah in 1850 and moved to Minnesota, which was still under the jurisdiction of Kemper. In 1858, after working in St. Paul and amongst the Chippewa at Gull Lake, Breck finally settled in the town which had grown up around the trading post and farm of Alexander Faribault, establishing a new Associate Mission, the "Bishop Seabury Mission," with a community of missionaries (now including women) who continued the commitment to daily common prayer and worked to establish schools and plant churches amongst both Native Americans and white settlers. The next year, Kemper determined to resign as Missionary Bishop and so convened a convention to organize the Diocese of Minnesota and elect a bishop.

Upon his arrival in Minnesota in November 1859, the newly consecrated bishop, Henry Benjamin Whipple, toured his diocese to learn more about it before deciding where he would make his home. The thriving capital city of St. Paul, with a busy port on the Mississippi River, would have made a logical choice, but he continued looking. When he came to Faribault, he found what he was looking for. Two visions converged, that of the missionary, Breck, inspired and schooled in his

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<sup>16</sup> James M. Woolworth, *The Cathedral in the American Church* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1883), 34-35.

work by Kemper, and that of Kemper's apostolic successor, not a Missionary Bishop, but a bishop with the heart of a missionary. With a bishop permanently in its midst, the Associate Mission, already having founded parishes and schools, could realize its true identity with a bishop and his cathedral at its center. In 1862, with Breck looking on, Whipple laid the cornerstone of the first cathedral erected in the Episcopal Church.

The purpose of the entire Bishop Seabury Mission was "the diffusion of religion and education," and if this goal were to be realized, missionaries had to be prepared. In the four years since Breck had come to Faribault, the requirements of a full Associate Mission had started to become a reality: a parish, day schools, a divinity school—all under the authority of the Bishop—and a cathedral. For the Episcopal Church on the frontier it was a stunning beginning.<sup>17</sup>

Another aspect of the catholic revival also had a major impact on cathedral building in America. In this survey of the history of cathedrals in America, the name of Doane, father and son occurs again and again. George Washington Doane had set up his bishop's chair in Burlington a year before John Keble's famous Assize sermon which is regarded as the beginning of the Oxford Movement. Influenced by the writings of the Tractarians and moving apace into the ritualist phase of the movement, the next generations of high churchmen were confident and aggressive, developing and successfully implementing their principles in a church which had emerged from its post-Revolution malaise and was awakening to its missionary character.

It was clear to many that diocesan boundaries which were coextensive with the boundaries of the states of the Union, created a situation which was not conducive to the proper exercise of the episcopate. Instead of a chief pastor whose ministry was closely connected with the lives of his people, the bishop in a geographically large diocese tended to become a remote administrator. Advocating what they called the "see principle," the high churchmen worked to divide large dioceses, having in mind as their objective that there should be a bishop in every large city. The natural corollary to this principle was that the bishop should have a

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<sup>17</sup> Scott and Neslund, 27.

cathedral.<sup>18</sup>

In the matter of dividing dioceses, they had some success. The large Diocese of New York, began spinning off smaller dioceses with a first division in 1839, and further divisions in 1868. Wisconsin and Illinois followed in the 1870s. With the “see principle,” they were similarly successful. Some of the new dioceses were still defined geographically rather than in relation to a central city, thus the Diocese of Western New York, rather than Buffalo; but Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), Albany (New York), Fond du Lac (Wisconsin), and Springfield (Illinois), adhered to the see principle in both form and substance. Cathedrals would not be far behind.

Furthermore, bishops increasingly felt the *need* for cathedrals. Several bishops were talking about this need as early as 1850. Having located in Trenton, rather than Burlington, the fourth Bishop of New Jersey, John Scarborough, expressed the need thus in his address to the convention of the diocese in 1886: “I am convinced every Bishop ought to have a Church which he can call his own, where he can have the ordering of the services, and at times taste the joys and blessings of pastoral work.”<sup>19</sup> A year earlier, the Reverend John Henry Hopkins, Jr., son of the first Bishop of Vermont, put the case more dramatically in a paper before the New-York Ecclesiological Society:

The Bishop has no Church of his own, except he be also a parish priest.... Where is the Bishop’s Church? He has none. When not actually engaged in his canonical visitation, he appears to have no business in any Church, except by invitation or permission of the rector.... Even when he ordains, it must be in somebody else’s church, and by permission of its rector, for he has, as I have already said, no church of his own.<sup>20</sup>

To catholic churchmen, with their high view of the Church and of the episcopate, this was an intolerable situation and, in diocese after diocese, it was being remedied.

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<sup>18</sup> DeMille, *Pioneer Cathedral*, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Journal, Diocese of New Jersey, 1886*: 157, quoted in Stone, 328.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 328-329.

### III

American cathedrals have come into being in various ways. In 1861, Bishop Whitehouse of Chicago adopted the financially troubled Church of the Atonement and converted it into the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul. In 1862, Bishop Whipple laid the cornerstone of a new cathedral which was simply to take the place of the old parish church of Faribault. In 1866, the great parish of St. Paul's, Buffalo, became the cathedral parish of Western New York. In 1866, the Diocese of Maine was too poor to pay a bishop's salary and so they made their new bishop rector of St. Luke's Church, Portland. In 1867, St. Luke's sold their first church building and began to build a cathedral. In 1872, the younger Doane secured the permission of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Albany to form a new church and congregation in the city of Albany, initially to provide a chapel for a diocesan school, but ultimately to grow into a cathedral. In 1873, as part of his plan to have a "true" cathedral organization, Doane prevailed upon the legislature of the State of New York to adopt an Act incorporating the cathedral, ensuring that the governance of the cathedral would be in the hands of a body of which the bishop is always to be the head.

The Cathedral of All Saints in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is an interesting case. Bishop Isaac Lea Nicholson is quoted as saying that it was the first "because it was started right." His successors have maintained that claim, though there was no cathedral in Milwaukee until 1873. The assertion of priority, hardly credible in the face of the evidence of at least seven other cathedrals already functioning at that date, seems to be based on the peculiar process by which the Milwaukee cathedral came into being. As early as 1865, in the last years of the venerable Bishop Kemper, there had been discussion of a cathedral. The third Bishop of Wisconsin, Edward Randolph Welles, records the ensuing action:

In the year 1868, the Diocesan Council memorialized the General Convention on the subject; asking for such legislation as would admit of the establishment of the Cathedral in the City of Milwaukee, for the Diocese of Wisconsin. The memorial was drawn up by the Rev. Dr.



Adams [Professor of Theology at Nashotah House and Kemper's son-in-law], and signed by Bishop Kemper, Bishop Armitage [Kemper's Coadjutor], forty-five priests and fifty laymen of the Diocese. 'This memorial enunciates the See principle, enlarging upon, (1) the Bishop as the successor of the Apostles, (2) the city as the place of the Bishop, (3) the Bishop's Church or Cathedral, as the mother Church of the whole Diocese; and the Bishop's residence as the centre of his work, the very focus of all influences whereby the propagation of the Gospel can be organized, pressed on, facilitated.'<sup>21</sup>

The influence of the catholic movement is clear in this resolution which provides a summary definition of the cathedral idea. In response, the General Convention of 1868 adopted a resolution giving the diocese authority to proceed on these lines. It is not clear why anyone believed that such authority was needed, but five years later Wisconsin had its cathedral, an existing church building purchased from the Congregationalists and refitted for its new use.

Our purpose, up to this point, has been to provide a context for the consideration of the significance of St. Mark's Cathedral, Salt Lake City. It may, without apology, claim to be unique among the early cathedrals of the Episcopal Church. It was not really founded—it simply was. When, at last, it was formally organized, it was clearly the bishop's church, his cathedral. Moreover, it was a *missionary cathedral*: not founded as a symbol of the success of the church as a great institution in a Christian society, but insinuating itself as a sign of the church's mission to seek and save the lost in a broken and sinful world. In all truth, many of our cathedrals have come into being as self-conscious statements that the Episcopal Church has arrived. The see cities already had established parishes. To create a cathedral it was necessary to establish a new, and probably unnecessary, parish, often luring away people from the older parishes and establishing the cathedral as a competitor, rather than a center.

The missionary cathedrals are relatively few. Faribault may be said

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<sup>21</sup> Edward S. Welles, ed., *Sermons and Addresses by the late Edward Randolph Welles, S.T.D., with Portraits and Memoirs* (Milwaukee: 1889), quoted in Stone, 334.

to be one such and Salt Lake City is clearly another. Bishop Whipple chose Faribault as his see city because it was a hub of missionary activity radiating its influence in a wide sphere. All that was lacking was an apostle to focus and lead the work.<sup>22</sup> When he arrived, the picture was complete and then we see the founding of a cathedral which absorbed the existing parish and served for many years as an effective center of diocesan mission. And then there is Salt Lake City. Setting aside questions of priority, if a cathedral ever was “started right,” it was St. Mark’s Cathedral.

The work in Salt Lake was begun by the bishop’s missionary while the bishop was working in other parts of his missionary district. It is impossible to imagine what the episcopate, indeed the whole ministry, of Daniel S. Tuttle would have been like if it had not been for his friendship with George W. Foote. Foote was a year behind Tuttle at the General Theological Seminary in New York. In the spring of Tuttle’s senior year, Foote’s father, the Rector of Zion Church, Morris, New York, suffered a stroke and was unable to do the parish work. The younger Foote proposed that, upon graduation, Tuttle go to Morris to assist his father. A formal invitation having been issued by the vestry of the parish and the Bishop of New York consenting, Tuttle began his ministry in Morris, eventually succeeding the elder Foote as rector.

Tuttle’s service in Morris would prove to be personally rewarding, leading to his marriage to Harriet M. Foote, the eldest daughter of the late rector. It would also have a major impact on his episcopate. Among those who accompanied Tuttle to the mission field were the Reverend George W. Foote; the Reverend G.D.B. Miller, husband of George’s sister Mary; and Sarah Foote, another of George’s sisters. One more of the Foote siblings, Henry, would join them later and be ordained by Tuttle. The mission to Montana, Idaho, and Utah was veritably a Foote family enterprise—and it is to George that Tuttle owed the most when it came to

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<sup>22</sup> Pride in the heritage of which he is himself a steward compels this writer to note that James Lloyd Breck, who was the energetic and effective head of the missionary activity centered in Faribault until Whipple’s arrival, is known as “the Apostle of the Wilderness,” a title given him by a twentieth century Archbishop of Canterbury. However, we must distinguish between those whose efforts are apostolic and those who are consecrated to be successors to the apostles. Only the former applies to Breck. Both apply to Whipple.

the establishment of his episcopal see.

Technically, Bishop Tuttle's missionary district was Montana, with jurisdiction in Idaho and Utah. Thus, in 1867, when he ventured west to begin this new ministry, he himself went to Virginia City, the capital of Montana. In the meantime, he assigned the work in Boise, where some missionary work had already been started, to Miller, and the work in Salt Lake City, the capital of the Mormons where there was no Christian church, to Foote and a young deacon, T.W. Haskins, who had just graduated from seminary. The first two winters of his episcopate, Tuttle spent in Montana.

In 1869, having established the work in Montana, and leaving clergy in charge of the two mission centers there, Virginia City and Helena, the bishop began to consider where he might best establish a permanent center for his work. He chose Salt Lake City. It was, by far, the largest settlement in his district, with 20,000 inhabitants, and it was a transportation center, with the major stage routes of his district all starting there. It was also the most challenging portion of the missionary district and Bishop Tuttle went there "to be the direct head of our church work in the Mormon land."<sup>23</sup>

He found the work well-begun, with regular services held in a rented hall, a school which shared the same rented quarters, and a rectory which the church owned outright. Responsibility for the work in Salt Lake before the bishop's arrival was shared by George Foote and T.W. Haskins, though the latter had been appointed chaplain in the U.S. Army, serving at nearby Camp Douglas and was available only part time for the parochial and school work. The numbers which the bishop reports in connection with St. Mark's school and with the Sunday school give us an idea of the success of the work which he came to oversee. St. Mark's school had opened with one hundred eighteen scholars. The Sunday school had one hundred sixty enrolled.

The bishop gave himself with energy and delight to the work of both schools, working not only as administrator but as chief teacher. He was a born teacher and had gained a great deal of experience in teaching and tutoring positions which helped fund his own schooling. As a priest

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<sup>23</sup> Tuttle, 244.

and bishop he continued to devote himself to teaching, not only because he loved the work, but also because he saw the great good that could be done.

Church schools are excellent instrumentalities for training the young to become intelligent churchmen and churchwomen. The Christian Church from the very earliest has enlisted learning to be the handmaid of religion. Education to be complete cannot ignore any one of the constituent elements of the tripartite man. It is not enough that the body shall be exercised and the mind trained, but the soul also is to be enlightened, guided, and disciplined. And in such spiritual enlightenment, guidance, and discipline, the potent forces of the will, the conscience and the habits are involved. Out from the threefold training in church schools may emerge in most wholesome manner and degree, faith that is not afraid to reason and reason that is not ashamed to adore.<sup>24</sup>

On my reaching Salt Lake City for the first time in 1867 I stayed only ten days. These ten days, however, sufficed to enable me to discover and to approve heartily the wisdom of Messrs. Foote and Haskins in deciding that a day-school would be a most efficient instrumentality in doing good missionary work. They acted promptly upon their decision and two days before I reached the city had opened the school. In Utah, especially, schools were the backbone of our missionary work.<sup>25</sup>

Tuttle was by no means the first to see the significance of schools in connection with the work of the church. And, while cathedrals have no exclusive claim on the ministry of schools, there is something particularly appropriate about education as an extension of the bishop's ministry through his cathedral—especially when that work is so clearly a missionary endeavor. We may remind ourselves that there was, even for the first year of the bishop's permanent residence in Salt Lake City, no formal organization (parochial or cathedral) to the work there, and yet, in

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 363.

substance, if not in form, a cathedral ministry was very much in evidence. Within another year, there would be the form, as well.

The immediate effect of the bishop's relocation to Salt Lake City and his assumption of oversight for the schools was to free Foote to concentrate on the pastoral work. However, there was also a need for funds and Foote left in November for a fund-raising tour of the East, leaving to the bishop the full responsibility of the parish, with the part-time assistance of Haskins. Foote's absence for nearly six months created the conditions which would lead to the organization of the cathedral and Foote's departure from Utah for service elsewhere. Quickly, and quite naturally, the bishop became the dynamic center of parish life, presiding at worship, preaching, teaching, ministering to the needy.

Growth according to circumstances, and not the carrying out of any preconceived plan, was the history of our work in Salt Lake. For over three years things went on without any local organization. Rev. Mr. Foote superintended the pastoral work, Rev. Mr. Haskins, in the main, the school work.... I, most of the time in Montana, was ultimate reference. In the autumn of 1869 I came to Salt Lake to make my home and Mr. Foote went East, for nearly six months, in the interest of our mission, visiting parishes and individuals and soliciting funds, specially for building a church. His spirited appeals were eminently successful and he returned about the middle of May, 1870.... The winter preceding his return I changed from an ultimate referee into an active combatant. In Mr. Foote's absence I was the pastor....<sup>26</sup>

In personal terms, it may have been inevitable that, when the people wished to organize a parish in the autumn of that year, the vestry would choose the bishop, not his deputy, to be their rector. Even in far less congenial circumstances, is it likely that a group of churchpeople would pass over their bishop in making such a choice, unless he were a decidedly unpleasant person? And even then, what might the consequences be? Ecclesiastical politics can be just as unpleasant as secular politics and a bishop who had been slighted could be very difficult to live with. In this

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 386-387.

case, it would not appear that there was any need for such cautionary considerations. Tuttle was an attractive and able leader who had become, *de facto*, their pastor, succeeding, rather than supplanting Foote and it was natural that he would be chosen as rector.

Furthermore, common sense would dictate the logic of organizing the parish around the bishop. This, after all, is the meaning of *episcopal* polity and order. Whether present or absent, the bishop is, in Tuttle's phrase, "the ultimate reference." The bishop is not an ornament designed to give *panache* to the Church, he stands at the center of the life of the Church. As Ignatius said, "Wherever the bishop appears let the congregation be present; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." It was not only fitting, giving the bishop the principal place in their parochial organization was the right thing to do.

The bishop reports that he took no personal role in the proceedings, not even attending either the meeting at which the parish was organized or the meeting of the vestry which elected him rector.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, Foote took the decision badly and the next day tendered his resignation as missionary, to be effective at the end of the year. A few months later he accepted a call in California and left Salt Lake City. In Foote's reaction, we see how personal pride can cloud the understanding of the ablest people. For Tuttle, Foote's departure was a great personal loss and in later years he gave tribute to the effectiveness of Foote's leadership in developing the Salt Lake Mission.<sup>28</sup>

The bishop did not ask to be elected rector, nor did he suggest, in so many words, that the parish church should be called a cathedral. However, his election as rector had obvious implications and the bishop laid down certain conditions for his acceptance of the election, one of which ensured that the parish would be a cathedral in fact as well as in name.

No elaborate system or ceremonies attended the establishment of our cathedral in Salt Lake. It was evolved out of the circumstances which have been recounted. I had said not a word about a cathedral, I had not planned for a

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 390.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 390-391.

cathedral. Yet one of the three conditions upon which I accepted the rectorship of St. Mark's parish squinted in a cathedral direction. It was that the nomination of all assistant clergymen of the parish should be lodged in the rector alone, that is, the bishop. Not long after, a vote of the vestry was placed on record that the building in course of erection should be called St. Mark's Cathedral and that the bishop of that region or district of which Salt Lake City should form a part, should always be, *ex-officio*, the rector of the cathedral parish. These two propositions adopted and recorded, first—that the bishop is always, by virtue of his office, the rector; and second, that in the rector alone is lodged the initiative of nomination of assistant parochial clergymen, constituted the sum total of anything like formulated cathedral organization. We made no talk of a dean or of canons or of a chapter.<sup>29</sup>

“Evolved out of the circumstances”—in context, this phrase, more than any other, suggests how it is that St. Mark's Cathedral, Salt Lake City, stands as a preeminent example of the evolution of the cathedral idea in America. In its beginnings, the church in Salt Lake was, quite simply, the Church gathered about her bishop. He was himself an exemplar of his Order: a missionary, teacher, and pastor who understood his ministry in apostolic terms. Seeking neither election as rector of St. Mark's nor the establishment of a cathedral, he had both because his leadership evoked in his people an intuitive understanding of the relationship of a bishop to his home church. Never identified as a member of any party which actively promoted such things, he achieved, virtually without conscious effort, an objective for which others would have to work assiduously in other dioceses.

In all of this, we have said nothing about the *building* of St. Mark's Cathedral. It should be clear that the building is not the primary thing, and yet it is not inconsequential. Christianity is a sacramental religion in which outward and visible signs are of great consequence. Sacraments give material substance to things unseen. Symbols point to realities beyond themselves. The most important thing to be said about a cathedral building

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

is that it signifies the communion which exists between a bishop and his people and the central place which the bishop has in the life of the church. It is a tangible reminder of the ministry of the bishop because it is his home, the place where he says his prayers, the place where he needs no one's permission to celebrate the sacraments or preach the Gospel, the place from which his ministry to his whole diocese radiates, and the place where he gathers his clergy and people for important occasions. Its most important furnishings are the bishop's chair and the altar which signify his roles as teacher and chief pastor, nurturing his people by Word and Sacrament.

The object of Foote's trip to the East was to secure funds for the erection of a church building and his success made possible the laying of the cornerstone on 30 July 1870, some months before the bishop and people of Salt Lake organized the cathedral parish. Architectural plans had been obtained from Richard Upjohn, the gothic revival architect of many notable church buildings, including Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York, and St. Paul's Cathedral, Buffalo, New York. By May 1871, the congregation was worshipping in the basement of the new church. In September of the same year, they moved services to the nave. Transepts and chancel were added subsequently. To any who may mistakenly think that monumental proportions and elaborate detail are essential to a cathedral, St. Mark's will seem small and relatively simple. Nevertheless, its seating capacity of five hundred would have held every Episcopalian in the territory at the time of its building—perhaps that is just the right size for a cathedral.

St. Mark's Cathedral was the first church in the territory to house a permanent non-Mormon congregation. When the Episcopal missionaries arrived in 1867, they were establishing a mission in what was truly a hostile religious environment. Their mission strategy was never one of confrontation, but they established themselves as a determined and faithful presence. First with their schools and regular worship, then with the bishop himself and, soon after, his cathedral, they became a powerful witness to the truth of the Gospel in the midst of an unbelieving majority population. In April 1872, just two weeks before St. Mark's Cathedral was consecrated, members of the cathedral parish established another missionary endeavor in the community, opening the first hospital in Salt Lake City. By 1880, the missionary efforts among the people of the city



had given rise to the need for a second parish, and St. Paul's Chapel was built.

Forty years after he accepted election as Bishop of Missouri and left Salt Lake City, Bishop Tuttle looked back on his experience with two cathedrals and said this about the cathedral idea in America:

The American cathedral is in the process of evolution. As yet we have no perfected type.... An American cathedral must be, I take it, a bishop's church; a church in which the bishop is immediate as well as ultimate controller and rector. Out of that principle the cathedral is to be developed along lines adapted to American ideas and adjusted to American habits....<sup>30</sup>

Consistent with that principle, in his years in Salt Lake he never attempted to develop a distinct constitution for St. Mark's, as some of his contemporaries had done in their cathedrals. While Tuttle was Bishop of Utah, St. Mark's never had a dean: the clergyman who carried the responsibility for the cathedral's day to day ministry was simply the pastor. The mission of the cathedral was always more important than the details of the organization. That mission clearly reflected both the office and the vision of the man at its head, so that St. Mark's Cathedral fulfilled its founder's objective and was a true American cathedral: an adaptation, not an imitation. Addressing the specific conditions in which it came to life, but remaining true to the essential principle of the church gathered about its bishop in the house of worship in which he has his seat, St. Mark's Cathedral was founded as a missionary cathedral of a Missionary Bishop.

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

*Cathedral Building in America: A Missionary Cathedral in Utah*  
By the Very Reverend Gary Kriss, D.D.

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*A note on the author:*

*Upon his graduation from Yale Divinity School, Gary W. Kriss was appointed Chaplain to the Congregation at the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul in Burlington, Vermont, where he was ordained Deacon and Priest. During his service there, the diocese and cathedral parish were engaged in building a new cathedral to replace the earlier one which had been destroyed by fire. From Burlington, he moved to southern Vermont to serve two rural missions until he was called to the staff of the Cathedral of All Saints in Albany, New York. During his thirteen years in Albany, he served successively as Assistant to the Dean of the Cathedral, Canon Precentor, and, from 1984-1991, as Dean. From 1992 to 2001 he was Dean of Nashotah House, the mission and theological seminary founded by Jackson Kemper and James Lloyd Breck in Wisconsin in 1842. As Dean of Nashotah, he was accorded a seat in All Saints' Cathedral, Milwaukee. He retired in 2001 and now lives near Salem, New York, where he is Vicar of St. Paul's Church.*