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MORMONISM
AND THE NEGRO:

FAITH, FOLKLORE, AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Armand L. Mauss

Armand L. Mauss, who recently became an Associate Professor of Sociology at Utah State University after five years of teaching at Diablo Valley College in California, is now completing a doctoral dissertation on "Mormonism and Urbanism" for the University of California at Berkeley. He has been a counselor in the bishopric of the Walnut Creek Ward and is presently the general secretary for Aaronic Priesthood-Adult in the Logan Fourth Ward.

It is probably a distressing turn of events for most Mormons to see the "Negro issue" replacing the "polygamy issue" as the one feature most likely to cross the popular mind whenever Mormonism is mentioned. Just when it was becoming almost respectable to be a Mormon, another skeleton is dragged out of our ecclesiastical closet for all the world to see. The world has begun to react with the equalitarian indignation appropriate to these times; particularly vocal have been the spokesmen of liberal religion, who, it would seem, have finally discovered discrimination in the churches during the last two decades.¹

The recent attention directed to the Mormon Church over this issue is, however, only partly a consequence of the new American concern for racial equality; it is largely a consequence also of the greatly increased extensiveness of the Church's encounter with the secular urban world.² The Mormon Church is now a major American denomination, whose membership is comparable to that of such "old line" denominations as the Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Congregational. Furthermore, a majority of the Mormon membership now resides in urban areas mostly outside Utah and Idaho, and for the first time in our history a prominent

Mormon has been seriously and widely considered as a presidential candidate. In the midst of such social and demographic changes, Mormons can only expect *more* confrontations over their peculiar ways with sincere, enlightened, and sophisticated non-Mormons. That is why the "Negro issue" cannot be ignored or waited out or wished away. Pending a possible change in the official Church position (a change which we may never live to see), we must attempt to *understand* that position, insofar as it can be understood, rather than apologizing for it or trying to explain it away.

It is, of course, difficult for the thoughtful Mormon to understand the Church's policy of withholding the Priesthood from Negroes, and many will probably frankly admit with me that the policy makes us quite uncomfortable, but my commitment to the religion is much too broadly based for me to become disaffected over what is, after all, a peripheral problem by comparison with the more fundamental tenets of the faith. Perhaps especially for academicians, one's intellectual life is a continuing struggle to resolve such puzzling gospel questions to some degree of satisfaction; so far, the "Negro issue" and a few others have defied resolution for me. However, in the process of pondering, while I have not as yet discovered what the scriptures really mean on this issue, I have come to some rather definite conclusions as to what they do *not* mean, a matter of even greater importance, perhaps, in the current social and political context.

If one finds the Church's policy on Negroes discomfiting, however, the "explanations" for it offered by well-meaning commentators (on all sides) are often even worse. On the one hand, we have those (conservatives?) who feel the need to "defend" the Church by "explaining" that the whole thing is somehow an unfortunate consequence of sins in the pre-existence, or of something Cain did (or Ham, or both), apparently

¹I would regard the following articles as examples of the reactions of "liberal" religionists: Donald L. Foster (an Orem, Utah, Congregational Minister), "Unique Gospel in Utah," *The Christian Century*, July 14, 1965, pp. 890 ff., in which the Mormon Church is chided for its denial of the priesthood to Negroes, and, in general, for resisting "... such social change and ecumenical developments as have been firing the imaginations and engaging the energies of many other American churchmen"; also, Glen W. Davidson (Department of Philosophy and Religion, Colgate University), "Mormon Missionaries and the Race Question," *The Christian Century*, September 29, 1965, pp. 1183 ff; and two *San Francisco Chronicle* articles by the Reverend Lester Kinsolving (formerly an Episcopal parish priest but now called a "worker-priest" and Religion Correspondent for the *Chronicle*): "The Mormons' Racial Doctrine," June 4, 1966, p. 35, and "Romney Ducks a Racial Issue," June 24, 1967, p. 26. Reverend Kinsolving has told me that he was an "agnostic" at the time he wrote the first of these articles.

As for my allegation that the concern shown by American churchmen about discrimination in the churches is only recent, no documentation should be needed for any informed student of American race relations. However, see for an example, Charles S. McCoy (Professor of Religion in Higher Education at Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California), "The Churches and Protest Movements for Racial Justice," in Robert Lee and Martin Marty (eds.), *Religion and Social Conflict*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1964. My reference here is, of course, to *white* churchmen, as a *group*, recognizing that there were, of course, a few pioneer voices crying in the wilderness much earlier about discrimination in the churches.

²Discussed at some length in "Mormonism and Urbanism," a Ph.D. dissertation in progress by the author in the Department of Sociology, University of California (Berkeley).

quite oblivious to the Second Article of Faith, which tells us that “. . . men will be punished for their *own* sins. . . .” On the other hand, we have those (liberals?) who are manifestly embarrassed that the Church has been caught with its civil rights down, and who assure us that this Utah vestige of Jim Crow will give way, ere long, to enlightened counsel, or to picketing, or surely to George Romney’s presidential campaign. In other words, the “defenders” are tying the issue to a heritage of American biblical folklore, while the “critics” are tying it to the current civil rights controversies. *Neither* position is warranted by the Standard Works, by official pronouncements of Church leaders, or by the logic of the Church policy itself.

This paper will expand upon these observations by arguing for three propositions: (1) the actual authoritative Church doctrine on the “Negro question” is extremely parsimonious, although it is not entirely without biblical precedent, and it is not too difficult to accept if it is linked cautiously with the doctrine of pre-existence; (2) although there are, of course, scriptural references to the War in Heaven, to the curse and mark on Cain, to the curse on Canaan, and to the blackness of Cain’s descendants, there is *no* scriptural warrant for linking any of these to a denial of the priesthood; and (3) none of this has anything to do with the civil rights issue until it can be demonstrated (and not just inferred) that the Church’s internal *ecclesiastical* policy carries over, in the form of civil bigotry, into the *secular* behavior of Latter-day Saints. As part of this last argument, I shall present recent empirical sociological evidence to the effect that there is *no such carry-over*.

FAITH AND DOCTRINE

The doctrine itself, as it is set forth in the Pearl of Great Price and in occasional pronouncements by the First Presidency, is quite simple—indeed, even cryptic: people of Hamitic (i.e. African) descent may be received into the Church and participate in all activities and ordinances, *except* those requiring that the participant hold the Priesthood, for people of this lineage may not be given the Priesthood.³ In practice this has meant that although considerable Church activity and participation are still open to them, those members known to have any African Negro ancestry (no matter what their color) cannot hold the lay priesthood offices held by practically all other Mormon men, nor can they receive Temple endowments or Temple marriages. No reasons have been given in any scriptures, ancient or modern, for this proscription; the official stance of the Church leaders has been simply that the Lord has so decreed and that no change can take place in this policy until He decrees otherwise.⁴

³See Pearl of Great Price, Moses 7:8; Abraham 1:20-27; also the letter of the First Presidency of the Church, dated August 17, 1951, as reproduced on pp. 16-18 of the second part of a small book by John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro*, Orem, Utah: Bookmark Division, Community Press, 1960.

⁴The policy of the Prophet Joseph Smith himself regarding the ordination of American Negroes

If the Lord has been unwilling to provide us explanations for His judgment in this matter, the same cannot be said for Mormon theologians, whether of the scholarly or the lay variety. Understandably, a doctrine and practice seemingly so at odds with the generally equalitarian ethos of Mormonism could not go unexplained and unjustified. Although exceedingly little of an official or *ex cathedra* nature has been offered, many Church leaders and other doctrinal writers, in their private capacities, have provided explanations, ranging from the rather uncompromising "they-had-it-coming" versions of some of the brethren,⁵ to the more humane, regretful, and hopeful position of President McKay.⁶ Out of the academic world, too, have come explanations ranging from the scriptural-historical one of the very orthodox William E. Berrett to the critical American-historical versions of the less orthodox Sterling McMurrin or Lowry Nelson.⁷ Meanwhile, Mormon Sunday School teachers, priesthood quorum teachers, and seminary teachers, frequently supported by quotations from this or that unofficial Church book, have been innocent purveyors of a variety of fundamentalist folklore.

For the orthodox but thinking Mormon, the unfortunate fact is that

is difficult to establish from extant official records. On the one hand, we have the apparently authentic affidavits of Zebedee Coltrin and A. O. Smoot to the effect that the Prophet once said (in the 1830's) that Negroes should not be given the Priesthood. (These documents are reproduced in Berrett, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11, in the second part of Stewart, *op. cit.*) The contexts of these affidavits, however, make it somewhat ambiguous as to whether the Prophet meant to deny Negroes the Priesthood on principle, or because they were, for the most part, still slaves who would be unable to function with the Priesthood. In any case, these documents are, at best, second-hand accounts rendered in 1879, forty years or more after the Prophet was supposed to have spoken on the question. On the other hand, it is apparently well established that at least one man of known Negro ancestry, Elijah Abel, was ordained both an Elder and a Seventy under the Prophet's jurisdiction.

Whatever ambiguity there may be in these records, it is clear from the Pearl of Great Price itself (Abraham 1:20-27) that the Prophet must have known, at least from 1842 on (when the Book of Abraham was first published), that Ham's lineage could not be given the priesthood. (Elijah Abel was first ordained in 1836.) The identification of African Negroes with Ham's lineage is apparently a matter of tradition, bolstered by some evidence from Biblical scholars, and made explicit for Mormons in the letter from the First Presidency of the Church, reproduced in Stewart, *op. cit.* (See fn. 3 above.) To an orthodox Mormon, such a formal and unanimous statement by the entire First Presidency, together with the passages in the Book of Abraham, would seem to constitute sufficient grounds for regarding the denial of the Priesthood to Negroes as the revealed will of God. On such grounds, it is difficult to agree with Samuel W. Taylor that this denial of the Priesthood is based not upon doctrine, but only upon "policy." (See Taylor's letter to the Editor, *San Francisco Chronicle*, Tuesday, July 11, 1967, p. 32.)

⁵See, for example, Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (2nd edition), Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society, 1935, pp. 105-111; and Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (2nd edition), Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, pp. 526-528. These authors are drawing upon opinions apparently held by Joseph Smith and other early Church leaders who were writing (I would insist) in their private or non-prophetic capacities. (See fn. 18 below.) See also Stewart's book, mentioned above in footnote 3, and John L. Lund, *The Church and the Negro*, Paramount Publishers (no place given), 1967. The Lund and Stewart books, both of which are valuable as collections of historical documents and opinions on the subject, are nevertheless unfortunate contributions to the literature, in my opinion, because they help to perpetuate and popularize the folk notions discussed below.

⁶See Llewellyn R. McKay, *Home Memories of David O. McKay*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, pp. 226-231.

⁷See Berrett's pamphlet referred to above in footnote 3 (in Stewart, *op. cit.*). For the attitude of McMurrin on the subject I am relying on an article by Phil Keif appearing in the *Oakland Tribune* (California) for April 5, 1965; Lowry Nelson's position is put forth in his article, "Mormons and the Negro" in *The Nation*, Vol. 174, pp. 488 ff., May 24, 1952.



we just don't know why the Lord has directed His Church to withhold the Priesthood from those of Hamitic lineage; it is a policy that we simply accept on faith because of our general commitment to the rest of the Restored Gospel. If we want to turn to certain other gospel doctrines or scriptural precedents for possible "explanations" about this problem, we may do so, but we are on our own. For example, we might recall that under the Mosaic dispensation, there was also a connection between lineage and priesthood, and a far more restrictive one, for *only* the Levite lineage could provide the priests. Or, we might observe that if, as Luke maintains, it was God "who determined the times and places of our habitation,"⁸ then God knew He was "discriminating" against anyone born in a time (e.g. 900 A.D.) or a place (e.g. modern China) in which the Priesthood (and indeed the Gospel itself) would be just as unavailable to him as if he had Hamitic lineage. But these are not really explanations; they are only relevant precedents that perhaps might make us feel a little less uncomfortable.

The explanation which seems to have the greatest currency among Mormons derives from the rather unique Mormon doctrine of pre-existence.⁹ We have all heard it: before being born as mortals, all men

⁸Acts 17:26.

⁹In his presentation of the "pre-existence explanation," Stewart (*op. cit.*, pp. 20-36) is expressing what I have found to be the most common version. See also Joseph Fielding Smith, *op. cit.* p. 43.

lived as spirits with God in a conscious individual existence of unspecified duration, which represented a necessary phase in our eternal progression. In this pre-existent life, God made many plans and decisions relating to the creation and destiny of the earth and its inhabitants. One of the decisions He made was that certain of His children should not be eligible to hold the Priesthood during their mortal lives, and one of the ways (but only one) in which He seems to have implemented this decision was to use the Hamitic lineage for non-Priesthood holders. Notice that such a conceptualization *reverses* the cause-effect relationship which most Church critics presume, i.e., that Negroes aren't given the Priesthood because they are Negro or because they are black; my interpretation of the "pre-existence explanation," on the contrary, would hold that some are born through Hamitic lineage because they cannot hold the Priesthood. Notice also that the distinguishing trait here is lineage, not color.¹⁰

One might tentatively accept this "pre-existence explanation" without too much difficulty, as long as it stays in this simple and unembroidered form; for the doctrine does seem to have some official backing, if we are to judge by a letter from the First Presidency,¹¹ and furthermore, it seems to have a *prima facie* plausibility, given certain Mormon doctrinal premises. However, referring the problem back to the pre-existence does not help too much, for we still don't know the *reason* for the Divine proscription. A common folktale has it that those born through the "cursed" lineage somehow failed to measure up during the War in Heaven, which occurred in the pre-existence between Jehovah and Lucifer. The notion that they were "neutral" in that war has gone out of vogue, only to be replaced by the equally dubious idea that they must

¹⁰What is being set forth here, of course, is only the theory behind the actual (or presumptive) policy. The practical applications of the policy to specific cases of Hamitic lineage might be rather problematical. One wonders, for example, why the Lord permitted the ordination of Elijah Abel (and I have even heard it claimed that Church records would show Abel's sons and grandsons to have been ordained too, although I have never seen any such records or their facsimiles). One wonders also how we can be sure that all who are given the priesthood are free of even remote Hamitic lineage, especially in such ethnically mixed areas as Latin America and Fiji. I know first hand of at least one case (my boyhood friends) in which a family of completely Caucasian *appearance* was denied the Priesthood for years because of genealogical evidence of remote Hamitic (i.e. Negro) ancestry. Even appeals to the General Authorities were to no avail, until the evidence itself was impeached and finally found to be dubious. Since then, members of the family have been ordained, but *not*, it should be noted, because of a relaxation in the *policy itself*. From time to time one hears rumors of incidents that do seem to constitute relaxations or "exceptions" to the policy, but first-hand information is extremely elusive. As far as I know, there is no official specification given as to how much, if any, Hamitic lineage is permissible for Priesthood holders. Presumably, in such matters, we must rely on the pronouncements about lineage given in patriarchal blessings. In any case, I am concerned here only with trying to understand the theory and doctrine from which the policy derives. In cases of ordinations which seem to constitute "exceptions," or are otherwise questionable, it is not my responsibility to offer "explanations"; these must come, if they are to come, from the Prophets themselves, who, we must presume, know what they are doing. Nothing is to be gained, it seems to me, by nit-picking about occasional exceptions to Church policies anyway, as long as these are rare; Mormon history has many such "exceptions" (e.g. the "rebaptisms" in Brigham Young's times), which the orthodox Mormon is usually willing to accept on faith, where no understandable explanation is available.

¹¹Sec pp. 16-18 of Berrett, *op. cit.* (in Stewart, *op. cit.*).

have been among the "less valiant" in the War.¹² Any such notion involves the assumption (unacceptable to me) that a certain mortal condition which we perceive to be disadvantageous can be assumed to be the result of some failing in the pre-existence. Such was not necessarily the case, according to Jesus, for the congenitally blind man whom He healed,¹³ and we do not have the right, it seems to me, to assume that such is the case for any *particular* instance of unfortunate mortal circumstances. For one thing, the assumption is complicated by the question of relativity: e.g., one wonders on what possible grounds we can say that American Negroes must be paying for some failing in the pre-existence, when their mortal circumstances are infinitely superior, one would think, to those of the contemporary inhabitants of China, who hold neither the Priesthood nor much of anything else.

So far then, the following points have been made regarding Church doctrine on the subject: (a) neither the Lord nor the Church leaders have given us an adequate explanation for withholding the priesthood from the Negroes or from anyone else; we simply accept the policy on the basis of faith, a few partially relevant scriptures, and the position of the First Presidency; (b) apparent scriptural or historical precedents may help us feel a little less beleaguered on the issue, but they don't really explain anything; (c) the "pre-existence explanation" may explain a little about *how* or *when*, and it suggests that Hamitic lineage is the *result* of ineligibility for the priesthood, *not the cause*; however, (d) this explanation tells us nothing about *why*, unless we mix in a dubious and speculative theory about the War in Heaven.

FAITH AND FOLKLORE

Having seen how sparse is the official and reliable doctrine on this subject, let us now turn to examine further some of the folklore which has rushed in to fill this doctrinal vacuum.¹⁴ The story about insufficient valor during the War in Heaven, mentioned above, is only one example. Two other folktales have long been common among Mormons, both of which are also found among other Christians. Neither of them has any real basis in the Standard Works of the Church.

The first one is based upon the account in Genesis of Ham's disrespectful behavior toward his father, Noah, upon discovering the latter in a naked and unkempt condition. Among the rebukes which Ham received for his misbehavior was ". . . cursed be Canaan . . .,"¹⁵ to which many Mormons and other Christians (of a fundamentalist variety) have given the far-fetched interpretation that this curse was the origin

¹²Stewart, *op. cit.*, 32-34; also Joseph Fielding Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹³John 9:1-3.

¹⁴The Fifes have shown us that Mormon ingenuity in folklore of all kinds is second to none. (Although much of it is ultimately of extra-Mormon origin, of course.) See Austin and Alta Fife, *Saints of Sage and Saddle: Folklore Among the Mormons*, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1956.

¹⁵Genesis 9:18-29. Canaan was a son of Ham. His implication in the incident is not explained.

of the postdeluvian Negro race and its troubles, including persecution, discrimination, and (for Mormons) the withholding of the priesthood. A tale which competes with this one for currency among Mormons (and with which it is often linked) is the one about the curse on Cain. According to this one, when Cain killed Abel he was given a "curse" and a "mark" in consequence of his murder. The "mark" was black skin, and the "curse" was that he should always be persecuted (and, by extension, not be given the Priesthood). Mormons usually corroborate this interpretation of the Biblical account with reference to our own Pearl of Great Price, where we are told that Ham's wife was a descendant of Cain, that Ham's lineage was "cursed . . . as pertaining to the Priesthood," and that a "blackness came upon" the descendants of Cain.¹⁶

These interpretations placed upon the stories of Ham and of Cain are so widespread, and so authoritatively passed on in certain Church books and articles, that many of my more orthodox friends are surprised and annoyed at my characterization of them as folklore. To such I can only point out the difference between that which is scriptural and that which is not. I am aware that some distinguished Church writers over a period of more than a century have propounded the cursed-be-Canaan and mark-of-Cain "explanations,"¹⁷ but these writers have written in their private capacities, and it is at least open to question whether they have been any more immune than the rest of us to the danger of mixing popular myths with sound doctrine. In any case, it is safe to say that their work is extra-scriptural and extra-doctrinal, and therefore not necessarily incumbent upon even the orthodox to accept. For the truth is that there is no real basis in the scriptures (Standard Works) for connecting any of these "curses" or "marks" with the denial of the priesthood to Negroes.¹⁸

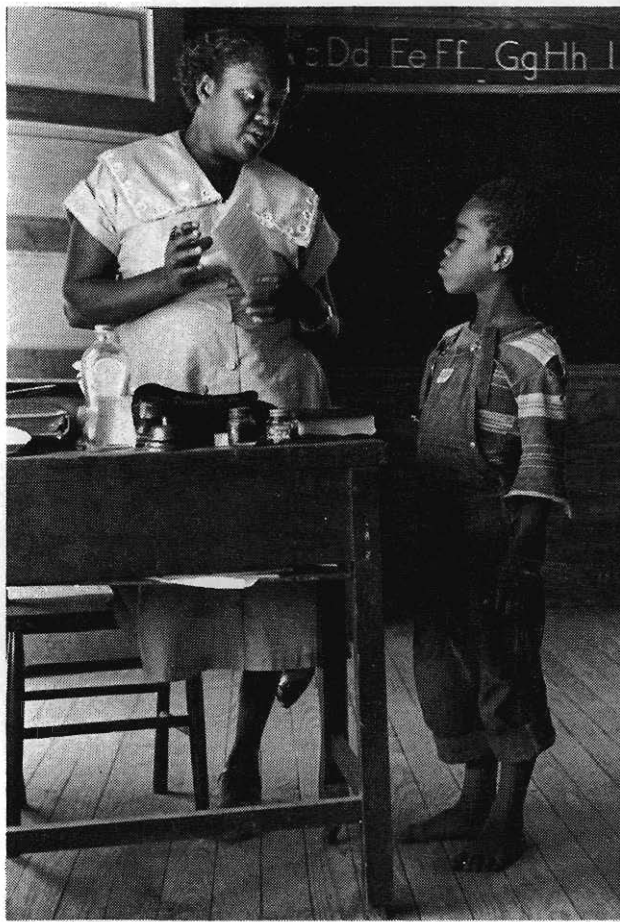
¹⁶See Genesis 4:9-15 and Pearl of Great Price, Moses 5:16-40; 7:7-22; Abraham 1:20-27; also treatment of Joseph Fielding Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-111.

¹⁷Joseph Fielding Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-111; also Berrett, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15 (in Stewart, *op. cit.*) provides a few examples from the writings of nineteenth century Church leaders. In using the word "folklore" here, I do not mean to say that the scriptural references themselves can be regarded as folklore, but only the *interpretation of them* which ties denial of the priesthood to skin color, or to the curses and marks on Ham or Cain.

¹⁸One of the more moot questions, especially on subjects of this kind, is the question of what is "official doctrine" and what is not. One would think that we should regard as official Church doctrine at least the Standard Works of the Church and those occasional pronouncements given by the First Presidency and/or the Twelve acting in formal and unanimous concert. Beyond that, there are many open questions, and the purport of my remarks in this paper, of course, is to deny that doctrines or opinions offered in books written by individual Church leaders, of however high callings, are binding upon the Latter-day Saints. In a lecture delivered on July 7, 1954, to Seminary and Institute teachers attending a BYU Summer Session, the late President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., dealt with this question and offered what I would regard as helpful counsel. He first referred his listeners to the Doctrine and Covenants 68:2-4, in which we are told that "scripture" is that which is spoken by those leaders who are "moved upon by the Holy Ghost," which implies, according to President Clark, that it is possible for leaders sometimes to speak *without* being so moved. Among the exact words of President Clark which bear particularly upon my contention are the following (all taken directly from this same lecture): ". . . only the President of the Church, the Presiding High Priest, is sustained as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator for the Church, and he alone has the right to receive revelations for the Church, either new or amendatory, or to give authoritative interpretations of scriptures that shall be binding on the Church. . . . Yet we must not

Let us look carefully at what the scriptures really say on these matters:¹⁹ if we take either the Old Testament or the Pearl of Great Price account of Cain's punishment, we are told very little about the "curse" and nothing at all about the "mark" except the cryptic comment that it was to protect the bearer from being killed. Nor are we given any grounds to suppose that either the "curse" or the "mark" should apply to any of Cain's descendants. To tie any of this to the fact that Cain's or Ham's lineage was "cursed as pertaining to the Priesthood" is to resort to pure conjecture. We simply don't know why Ham's lineage was chosen to carry the denial of the priesthood. Similarly, the datum given us that "a blackness came upon" some of the descendants of Cain has nothing necessarily to do with the "mark" put on Cain himself. We are nowhere in the scriptures told just what Cain's mark was, and the first mention of the "blackness" of Cain's descendants is in Enoch's time, *six generations after Cain*. (In fact, it is not really explicit that the "blackness" was even a literal blackness of the skin.)

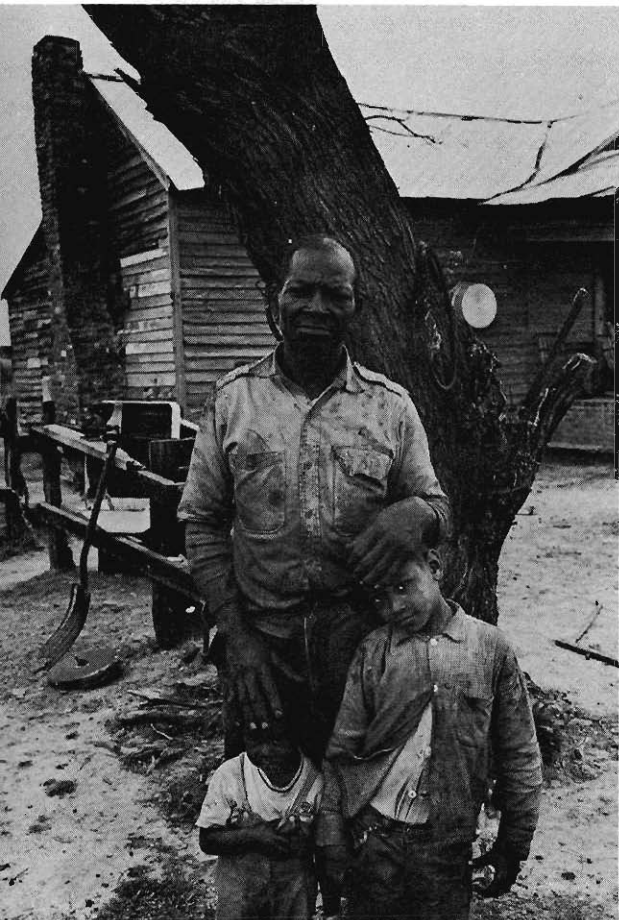
The reference to the "curse" put on Ham by Noah is no more well-founded as an "explanation" than is the mark-of-Cain theory. There is absolutely no scriptural basis for



forget that the prophets are mortal men, with men's infirmities. . . . Asked if a prophet was always a prophet, Brother Joseph quickly affirmed that a prophet is a prophet only when he is acting as such (from the *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. V, p. 265). . . . Even the President of the Church has not always spoken under the direction of the Holy Ghost, for a prophet is not always a prophet. I noted that the Apostles of the Primitive Church had their differences and that in our own Church, leaders have differed in their views from the first. . . . When any man, except the President of the Church, undertakes to proclaim one unsettled doctrine, as among two or more doctrines in dispute, as the settled doctrine of the Church, we may know that he is not 'moved upon by the Holy Ghost,' unless he is acting under the direction and by the authority of the President. . . ." As for the critical question of how to tell when a doctrine is pronounced by a prophet or leader who is "moved upon by the Holy Ghost," President Clark suggests only a *subjective* test; i.e., in the final analysis, we can tell when our leaders are so moved only when we ourselves are so moved, which has the effect, he points out, of shifting the burden from the speaker to the hearer.

¹⁹(See scriptural references in fn. 16 above.)

assuming that anything Ham himself did was involved in the denial of the priesthood to his descendants, except, of course, as the Pearl of Great Price indicates, he seems to have married into the non-Priesthood-holding lineage.²⁰



So far, then, I think I have demonstrated that three of the most widespread “explanations” in the Church for the denial of the Priesthood to Negroes are unsupported in the scriptures of the Church and should therefore be regarded as speculation, or even folklore; these are: (a) the War-in-Heaven theory; (b) the curse-on-Ham theory; and (c) the mark-of-Cain theory. Whatever discomfiture we Mormons may feel at the lack of explanation for the Church’s doctrine and practice relating to Negroes, we should once and for all disabuse ourselves and our Church friends of these folktales. Not only do they lack theoretical viability, but they add an encumbrance of ridiculousness and superstition to a Church policy that is otherwise only enigmatic. Furthermore, and perhaps more seriously, these unscriptural tales may provide a pretext for those among us who are given to civil bigotry to rationalize it.

THE CHURCH UNDER ATTACK

At the national convention of the NAACP July, 1965, a strongly worded resolution condemning the Mormon “doctrine of non-white inferiority” was introduced by the Salt Lake and Ogden Chapters and passed by the entire convention. The solution contained many misconceptions about the actual doctrines of the Church, most of which were understandable and forgivable errors, for they had only been taken from the folklore and the unofficial opinions of well-known Church writers, which I have criticized above (e.g., that the Church teaches of “spiritual inferiority,” of “lesser valiance in the pre-existence,” etc.). One line of reasoning expressed in the resolution, however, was simply a case of gratuitous assumption and dubious logic, i.e., that the Mormon doctrine about the Negro “. . . carries over into the civil

²⁰Abraham 1:20-27.

life of Mormons . . . fosters prejudice and . . . perpetuates the contention that Negroes deserve to be the subject of disadvantaged conditions during their lives on earth. . . ."²¹ For this latter charge, no evidence was cited in the resolution, and I strongly suspect that none had been gathered, aside from vague subjective impressions of individual Negroes. Yet, the validity and saliency of the entire resolution hangs upon this unsubstantiated assumption, for only if it can be shown that the Church's doctrine on the Negro ". . . carries over into the civil life of Mormons" can the NAACP (or any other civil organization) legitimately concern itself with quaint Mormon doctrines and practices.

This tendency to assume that the internal Church policy on Negroes is somehow connected with the civil rights issue is found, unfortunately, among critics within the Church, as well as among outsiders. Stewart Udall, for example, makes this mistake in his recent letter to the Editors of *Dialogue*, where he criticizes the Church policy explicitly in the context of a discussion of civil racial justice.²² To say "we violate the rights and dignity of our Negro brothers . . ." by withholding the Priesthood from them makes no more sense than to say that we violate the rights and dignity of our women by withholding the Priesthood from them. After all, one of the "imperious truths of the contemporary world" (which truths Udall wants us to "come to grips with") is that discrimination on the basis of sex is just as outdated as discrimination on the basis of race, and is just as illegal, furthermore, in much of our recent civil rights legislation. So what? Even if Udall is right that the Church's Negro policy has ". . . no real sanction in essential Mormon thought," he has apparently forgotten that the principle of continuous revelation through the prophets *is* essential in Mormon thought; and when the day comes that Church policies unfashionable to the times are changed by "we Mormons," or that our leaders feel they must ". . . courageously [face] the moral judgment of the American people . . ." for their inspired guidance, that will be the day that Mormonism will be just another dissipated denomination. That the Church must be open to change is a contention that probably no one will contest, and Mormonism is structurally and theologically better equipped for change than are most denominations, precisely *because* of the principle of continuous revelation. However, it is difficult to see how a committed Mormon could find any satisfaction or moral strength in watching his prophets make changes, either to satisfy Udall's "enlightened men everywhere," or to avoid running ". . . counter to the great stream of modern religious and social thought." Nor will the Church be strengthened to face the modern age by Udall's cynical implication that what *really* brings about revelation

²¹A complete copy of the final resolution is in my files. It was more or less fully described in the news media (e.g. *San Francisco Examiner*, July 2, 1965, p. 6).

²²See Mr. Udall's letter to the Editors in *Dialogue*, Summer, 1967 (II:2), pp. 5-6. All of my quotations of Mr. Udall in this section of the paper are excerpted from the same letter. Although I have taken most of them out of their specific contexts, I think I have not distorted the sense in which Mr. Udall used any of them.

(as in the abandonment of polygamy) is the realization by Church leaders that they are “. . . unable to escape history. . . .”

However doubtful may be the validity of the efforts made by “inside” critics like Udall to tie the L.D.S. “Negro problem” to the issue of civil racial justice, these efforts are met with great interest and satisfaction by non-Mormon critics and reformers, who are anxious to help bring Mormonism up to date in its doctrines and practices. One of these is the Reverend Lester Kinsolving, who is called an Episcopal “worker-priest,” is Religion Correspondent for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and produces a couple of religion programs for radio station KCBS in San Francisco. In his *Chronicle* column last June, the Reverend Kinsolving made an invidious comparison between Udall’s recognition of a “fact of political life” and Governor Romney’s “. . . attempt to circumvent the [race] issue . . .” in maintaining that he should be judged by his own civil rights record, rather than by what people think about his Church’s doctrines.²³ Kinsolving seemed rather taken also with the apparent irony that while Governor Romney was criticizing Udall’s comments in *Dialogue*, Mrs. Romney was resigning from a private women’s club because of its policy of racial discrimination. To be consistent, Kinsolving suggested, the Romneys should also quit the Mormon Church, or at least “. . . join fellow Mormons like Udall in protesting . . . racial discrimination within [their] church.” In conclusion, the good Reverend offers us the charitable pastoral judgment that Governor Romney’s “projected image of sincerity” will be open to question until he is willing to join in criticizing his church for its racial discrimination.²⁴

Reverend Kinsolving had made similar observations during his KCBS Sunday evening program toward the end of May (1967). This program, the first in the series, was devoted entirely to a discussion of the “racial doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” The usual format of the two-hour program calls for one or several guests appearing to discuss an issue for a half-hour or so, and then the Reverend and his guests entertain telephoned questions and comments from the radio audience. On this particular evening, however, the Reverend explained, he had been unable to get any Mormon representatives to appear on the program, in spite of many conscientious efforts to do so. In lieu of any guests in person, therefore, the Reverend, whose announced aim for the program is an “unencumbered search for truth,” proceeded to “explain” the Mormon Church’s position on Negroes by means of quotations from *Mormonism and the Negro* by John J. Stewart. Both in a phone call to the program and later in a letter to the Reverend, I strongly protested the use of such an unofficial source. My letter also attempted, without success, to disabuse the Reverend of his unsupported assumption that there is necessarily a tie between the Church’s Negro policy and the secular issue of civil rights. As for Mrs. Romney, my

²³Lester Kinsolving, “Romney Ducks a Racial Issue,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 24, 1967, p. 26.

²⁴*Ibid.*

letter pointed out, her behavior in remaining a Mormon, while quitting a discriminating club, was no more inconsistent than would be, say, the behavior of an Episcopalian (or Roman Catholic or Mormon) who might protest unfair employment practices against women while still affiliating with a church which does not let women hold the priesthood.

Reverend Kinsolving's reaction to my letter was to invite me to appear on his program July 2, 1967, when he would again deal with the "racial doctrines" of the L.D.S. Church. Also invited, to provide an "alternative view," was the Reverend A. Cecil Williams, Minister of Worship at the Glide Memorial Methodist Church in San Francisco, and a Negro. The latter's contribution, in my opinion, was surprisingly limited and restrained, except for a very brief critical comment right at the end of the program, which time did not permit me to even try to answer. Almost all of the dialogue was between the Reverend Kinsolving and myself, with rather little time given to the few telephone calls that got through.²⁵

I was given seven or eight minutes near the beginning of the program to read a brief prepared statement, but that was the only opportunity I had for an uninterrupted statement on any of the questions put to me. Some of the Reverend's questions were of an *ad hominem* nature (attacking me for "inconsistencies" or "inaccuracies" which he thought had appeared in some of my earlier papers on this subject), and still other matters that he raised seemed to me to be of doubtful relevance.

A matter of some substance which did arise, and which, in fact, was recurrent throughout the program, was the controversy over what relevance the peculiar Mormon doctrine on the Negro has to the civil rights issue. The Reverend Kinsolving, and to a lesser extent the Reverend Williams, both took the position, expressed in the NAACP resolution referred to above, that one must naturally expect Mormons to translate their Church's policy into anti-Negro secular behavior. I, of course, denied that one can reasonably make such assumptions in the absence of systematic empirical evidence, and I cited my own research (discussed herein below) as evidence contrary to their assumption. Reverend Kinsolving had read the published results of my research, and he made no attempt to impeach either my findings or my methods; he simply continued to insist (apparently ignoring my evidence) that the internal Mormon policy on Negroes was a secular civil rights issue. Aside from "common sense," the only evidence the Reverend offered was an article by Glen W. Davidson, which appeared about two years ago in *The Christian Century*.²⁶

In this article, Davidson made a number of allegations about the unwholesome pressures which Mormon leaders have exerted to prevent

²⁵The description herein of my dialogue with the Reverend Kinsolving during the July 2nd radio program is based upon my review of a tape recording of the program which is in my possession.

²⁶Glen W. Davidson, "Mormon Missionaries and the Race Question," *The Christian Century*, September 29, 1965, pp. 1183-1186.

fair employment, open housing, and other civil rights legislation from passing in Utah (and even in California). For all of these allegations, Davidson offers only hearsay as evidence, nor does he give us any idea about his "sources" of information. One example of his "evidence" for the Church's influence on civil rights bills before the Utah legislature in 1965 was the statement that "Rumor fanned speculation that the church was working behind the scenes to defeat the bills."²⁷ Davidson is free also with his judgments about people's motives and innermost thoughts, charging that many Mormon converts are joining the Church mainly because it provides them with a "sanctimonious front" for their racism.²⁸



And the ordinary Mormon can only stand in awe of Davidson's intimate knowledge of what transpires at the meetings of the Twelve and in other high Church councils. We are informed, for example, that there is "heated debate . . . within the Council of the Twelve Apostles" over the Church's stand on the race question, with Joseph Fielding Smith leading the "conservative faction" and Hugh B. Brown leading the "liberal faction."²⁹ However, by December of 1963, Davidson somehow discovers that "the leadership of the apostles' conservative faction . . . had passed from Joseph Fielding Smith to Ezra Taft Benson." The latter, of course, has a ". . . warm friendship with Robert Welch, the 'revelator' of the John Birch Society . . ." and thus Davidson ties the Mormon "Negro problem" to the right-wing conspiracy.³⁰

²⁷*Ibid.*, 1185.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 1184.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 1183-1184.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 1185.

In his "unencumbered search for truth," the Reverend Kinsolving took several passages verbatim from Davidson's article and read them over the air as "evidence" of the kind of Mormon secular racism that derives from the "Negro doctrine" of the Church. I was then invited to answer the charges, which I started to do point by point, although I didn't get very far before being stopped by a series of interruptions. I tried two or three times to make the point that racism in Utah, even among Mormons, cannot be assumed to result from Mormon policies on the Priesthood, any more than anti-feminism can be assumed to result from Episcopalian policies on the priesthood. For one thing, I insisted, racial attitudes in any population are shaped in large part by such



secular social factors as education level and rural or urban origin, so that one cannot really know how much Utah racism is attributable to religion until rural Mormons are compared with rural others, poorly educated Mormons are compared with poorly educated others, etc. Apparently having difficulty with the subtleties of causal reasoning, the Reverend then asked that if the Mormons were not responsible for Utah's backwardness in civil rights, was I suggesting that the blame should be laid to the Protestants in Utah, or, perhaps, to the Hindus? After all, I was reminded, Utah was the only state in the West by 1965 without any open housing legislation.³¹ And so it went.

WHOSE CIVIL RIGHTS?

The Kinsolving programs and articles, together with the growing volume of unfavorable publicity from critics inside and outside the

³¹This charge is, of course, inaccurate if only because of the case of California, whose voters,

Church, are all symptomatic of our failure to make clear to the world that our doctrines and policies on the Negro have no necessary bearing on secular issues like civil rights. For this gap in communication, there is probably blame on both sides. On the Mormon side, the leaders of the Church have shown a decided unwillingness to discuss the matter at all. The members at large, meanwhile, have tended to take one of three approaches to the problem, none of which has contributed much to public understanding: they have either (1) tried to avoid talking about it to non-Mormons, and then shuffled with embarrassment when "found out"; (2) tried to "explain" the Church position by resorting to unscriptural racial folklore; or (3) demanded that the Prophet change the doctrine and policy. This last approach can only strengthen the popular tendency to think that the Church policy is somehow connected to the civil rights issue, and it is therefore likely, ironically, to foster even more public misunderstanding and hostility.

On the non-Mormon side of the communication gap, there has been a regrettable, if understandable, tendency to jump to conclusions about the meaning of the L.D.S. "racial doctrines," without much effort to ascertain what the real meaning is. At its worst, this attitude is expressed in a reformist zeal reminiscent of that of our heresy-hating nineteenth century sectarian persecutors. After all, when a religious group is publicly condemned, picketed, and ridiculed because of an unfashionable doctrine that has no demonstrated social consequence, this is called religious bigotry. The fact that it may be carried on in the name of equality and brotherhood, or in such media of modern religious "liberalism" as *The Christian Century* and the Kinsolving show, does not alter the character of the calumny. Whatever happened to "civil rights" for religious minorities?

The contention that the L.D.S. "Negro doctrine" has no necessary relevance to secular civil rights or racial justice is, of course, a crucial one for the case being here advanced. Although I would argue that the burden of proof lies with those who would contend to the contrary, I would here like to discuss some empirical evidence for my own contention. Let us note, first of all, that President Hugh B. Brown has gone to some lengths in recent General Conferences of the Church to emphasize that ". . . there is in this Church no doctrine, belief, or practice that is intended to deny the enjoyment of full civil rights by any person, regardless of race, color, or creed."³² In other words, there is nothing in the *internal* ecclesiastical policy itself to warrant any kind of "carry over" into *external* civil life. In the same statement, President Brown warned that ". . . all men are the children of the same God, and that it is a

by a margin of 2 to 1, passed Proposition 14 in November, 1964. This had the effect of wiping off the books all of the "fair housing" legislation ever passed in California (one wonders how the California Mormons were able to bring *that* about!). This situation prevailed throughout 1965 and 1966, until a recent Supreme Court decision striking down Proposition 14.

³²This unequivocal statement in the April, 1965, General Conference was quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* for April 17, 1965. Another statement by President Brown condemning racism, this time at the April, 1966, General Conference, is quoted on the last page of *Dialogue* for Summer, 1966 (Vol. I, No. 2).

moral evil for any person or group of persons to deny any human being the right to gainful employment, to full educational opportunity, and to every privilege of citizenship. . . ." This makes it clear to Church members that there *must not* be any carry over of the ecclesiastical practice into the civil world; not only does the Church's "Negro policy" not justify secular racial discrimination, but those who practice it are clearly failing to comply with the most fundamental and elementary injunctions of the Gospel.

THE EVIDENCE AGAINST DOCTRINE CAUSING PREJUDICE

Just how well the Latter-day Saints succeed in complying with gospel standards in this regard is an open empirical question, and one which has been asked frequently about other denominations as well. Sociological studies on the relation between religious beliefs and race attitudes or practices are not numerous, and their findings are far from conclusive: apparently some religious beliefs "carry over" and some do not, and there are always many intervening variables. Glock and Stark, in their recent and penetrating study, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*,³³ conclude that the relation between religious beliefs and race attitudes is clear where anti-Semitism is concerned, but not in the case of anti-Negro prejudice.³⁴ My own study, the only one I know of to deal with this question among Latter-day Saints, appears in the Fall, 1966, issue of the *Pacific Sociological Review*.³⁵ It is an analysis of survey data taken from three L.D.S. wards (congregations) in the East Bay area of California, using an adaptation of the questionnaire upon which Glock and Stark based their recent study of Catholics and Protestants in the West Bay area. My access to the Glock-Stark data made it possible to compare item-by-item my Mormon responses with those of the Catholics and Protestants in the same general area. A number of questions can certainly be raised about the representativeness of my sample, and I would refer interested readers to the paper itself for my defense of the sample. Here I might simply point out that the sample represented every home in all three wards (with a net questionnaire return of 258), and that an extensive internal study of the samples was made, as well as a study of the differences between respondents and non-respondents. All relevant sociological categories were well represented in the sample; and among the respondents there were no appreciable differences in attitude between the Utah-born and California-born, between those recently arrived from Utah (or Idaho) and those in California a long time, between those giving

³³Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*, New York: Harper and Row, 1966. The authors review some of the literature on the subject of religion and race attitudes. See also Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1958, pp. 420-422 and John D. Photiadis & Arthur Johnson, "Orthodoxy, Church Participation, and Authoritarianism," *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1963, pp. 244-248.

³⁴Glock and Stark, *op. cit.*, Chapter 10.

³⁵Armand L. Mauss, "Mormonism and Secular Attitudes toward Negroes," *Pacific Sociological Review*, Fall, 1966 (Vol. 9, No. 2).



different reasons for leaving Utah, or between converts and life-long members. These considerations, combined with the demographic fact that the "typical" Mormon is now as likely to be found on the Pacific Coast as in Utah, make for more confidence in my sample than might be warranted at first glance.

Six indicators of anti-Negro secular attitudes received special attention in this study. Three of these were indicators of "prejudice": (1) a belief that Negroes have inferior intelligence; (2) a belief that Negroes are immoral; and (3) a belief that Negroes don't keep up property. Three others were taken as indicators of a tendency to practice "discrimination": (4) a stated preference for segregated schools; (5) a stated preference for segregated wards; and (6) a declaration of intention to sell the home and move if Negro families moved into the neighborhood.³⁶ (Whatever questions can be raised here about the difference between "admitted" and "actual" racism can also be raised, of course, about *any* study of this kind, including the one by Glock and Stark, to which mine is comparable.)

The first level of analysis was a gross comparison between Mormons and other denominations in their responses to the above six items. (Table I in original paper).³⁷ This comparison showed that the Mormons, in spite of their peculiar doctrine on Negroes, were no more likely to give anti-Negro responses than were the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans (whether American or Missouri Synod) or Baptists (whether American or Southern), and furthermore that the Mormon responses were very nearly the same as the Protestant averages.

The rest of the analysis (the major portion) consisted of comparisons between (or among) *Mormon* categories: first of all, Mormons were compared according to their differential frequencies of church attendance,

³⁶My distinction between "prejudice" and "discrimination" is after the well-known formulations appearing in Allport, *op. cit.*, pp. 14 ff. and Peter I. Rose, *They and We*, New York: Random House, 1964, Chapter 4.

³⁷The tables in the original paper have been deliberately omitted to facilitate the reading. They are, I believe, adequately summarized here and can easily be obtained from the original article by interested persons. The *Pacific Sociological Review* is available in the library of virtually any four-year college or university west of the Rockies, and often in other regions as well.

frequencies of scripture reading, and frequencies of private prayer (all considered indicators of devoutness). No consistent or systematic differences in the rate of anti-Negro secular attitudes appeared in any of these comparisons (Table II in original paper). Next, Mormons were compared according to their "orthodoxy" on certain key doctrines: the literal divinity of Jesus; the President of the Church as exclusive "prophet, seer, and revelator"; and the withholding of the Priesthood from Negroes as the will of God. A dichotomized comparison between full believers and those expressing any degree of doubt in each of these doctrines revealed some modest percentage-point differences (i.e. the "orthodox" were somewhat more likely to express anti-Negro secular attitudes), but the differences were not statistically significant even at a ten percent probability level. Furthermore, the tendency among Mormons for anti-Negro attitudes to increase with degree of orthodoxy was found to be *at least* as true for Congregationalists, Methodists, and American Baptists also (Table III in original paper).

The third kind of intra-Mormon comparison involved social and ecological variables: education, occupation, age, sex, region of origin, community size of origin, and length of time in California (Tables IV and VI). Here, for the first time, many rather large differences occurred. The incidence of anti-Negro secular attitudes varied inversely with education, occupation, community size of origin, and youth. That is to say, the likelihood of expressed anti-Negro attitudes was considerably greater among the poorly educated, the manual occupations, those of rural or small town origin, and the old—those categories known by sociologists to be prone to prejudice in *any* denomination.

Finally, some multi-variate analysis was done, in which the "orthodox" or "believers" were compared with the "doubters" (cf. the three doctrines mentioned above) within categories of education and of community size; or, in the jargon of science, with education and with community size "held constant" (Tables V and VII). In these comparisons, the differences between the "believers" and the "doubters" (in the tendency to express anti-Negro secular attitudes) greatly diminished (and in many cases disappeared entirely) with increasing education and community size of origin. In fact, among those of urban origin, the "orthodox" or "believers" were consistently *less* likely to express anti-Negro attitudes than were the "doubters" of key Church doctrines. All of this evidence led me to conclude the paper as follows:

It would seem, from a study of the data here presented, that the null hypotheses must be allowed to stand for the *religious* variables; that is, no systematic differences in secular race attitudes were to be seen either between Mormons and others, *or* between orthodox and unorthodox Mormons. In most of their responses, Mormons resembled the rather "moderate" denominations (such as Presbyterian, Congregational, Episcopalian), rather than the "fundamentalists" or the sects. To be sure, Mormons *did differ among themselves* in the tendency to hold negative secular attitudes

toward Negroes, but these differences were *not* so much between the orthodox and unorthodox, or the active and inactive, as they were between the educated and uneducated, the manual and the professional, the old and the young, or the rural and the urban (as in any denomination). . . . This accords with other studies which have found socio-economic status an important determinant of attitudes toward minorities.³⁸

CONCLUSION

My plea, then to the civil rights organizations and to all the critics of the Mormon Church is: get off our backs! The Mormon leadership has publicly condemned racism. There is no evidence of a carry-over of the Mormon doctrine on the Negro into secular civil life; in fact, there is evidence to the contrary. No matter how much racism you think you see in Utah, you can't be sure it has anything to do with Mormonism. It might be related to the rural and small-town environment in much of the Mountain West (as in other parts of the country), or it might be the sickness of individual Mormon bigots, who would find some *other* way to rationalize their racism, even if the Mormon Church were without its peculiar "Negro doctrine."³⁹

Will the Mormon Church ever change its stand on the Negro? There is no reason, in either Mormon doctrine or tradition, that it could not be changed. In fact, the unique doctrine of continuous revelation makes even drastic changes less difficult than in most denominations (recall the polygamy issue). Not only is there a precedent in the Manifesto of 1890 for a change of great magnitude, but the New Testament itself gives us a perhaps more appropriate precedent in the decision to admit Gentiles into full fellowship (without circumcision), an innovation which, like the present "Negro issue," was fraught with ethnic overtones and apparently strongly resisted in high places in the primitive Church for some time.⁴⁰ Perhaps now, as then, the chief deterrent to a divine mandate for change is not to be found in any inadequacy among Negroes, but rather in the unreadiness of the Mormon whites, with our heritage of racial folklore; it is perhaps we whites who have a long way to go before "the Negroes will be ready" for the priesthood.⁴¹ One can specu-

³⁸Some of my Mormon critics have expressed disappointment in my findings to the effect that Mormons are not very different from others in the tendency to hold racist attitudes, pointing out that we can take small comfort indeed in the evidence that Mormons are no better than others in this regard. My reply to this understandable reaction is that *by comparison with the charges of extraordinary Mormon racism, which are made by most of our critics, my findings are great comfort indeed!* This would be no reason, however, for complacency; this much racist feeling in a Mormon population surely indicates the need for some religious education on the subject, which our seminars and institutes could well provide.

³⁹Photiadis and Johnson (*op. cit.*, fn. 33) concluded that the secular variable of authoritarianism might be prior (or causal) to the *religious* variables of orthodoxy and participation.

⁴⁰Acts, Chapters 10 and 11.

⁴¹Brigham Young (quoted in Berrett, *op. cit.*, p. 14) was among those who held that no change could occur in the policy of denying Negroes the Priesthood until all the rest of Adam's

late, however, that if our missionary work ever gets going in black Africa (as apparently it almost did recently), it will only be a matter of time before at least Aaronic Priesthood leadership among Africans will be a necessity.⁴²

Whenever change comes, however, it must come in the Mormon way; that is, the integrity of the principle of continuous revelation must be maintained. Without this, and without the charisma of the "prophet, seer, and revelator," Mormonism would be without its most vital distinguishing attribute. Any perceived threat to the "due process" implied in the doctrine of continuous revelation will be resisted not only by the Church leadership, but also by the overwhelming majority of the rank and file. Consequently, agitation over the "Negro issue" by non-Mormon groups, or even by Mormon liberals, is likely simply to increase the resistance to change. This consideration might not, in the eyes of the NAACP, provide sufficient grounds for ceasing the agitation if a question of civil rights were involved; *but it is not*. No one, I take it, would suggest that holding the Priesthood in the Mormon Church is a right guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States. Membership in the Church is voluntary in the fullest civil sense: it is not a condition for holding a job, for owning property, for getting an education, for exercising the voting franchise, or for any other civil right. At the same time, there is nothing to restrain Mormons from engaging in civil rights campaigns and activities whenever conscience dictates, as indeed some have done.⁴³ So why denounce the Mormon Church for its "stand on civil rights"? To do so is not only inappropriate but is likely to have the opposite of the desired effect. Furthermore it is, in a sense, a form of religious persecution. Until it can be shown that the Mormon "Negro doctrine" has behavioral consequences in the civil world, it is just as much a form of bigotry and persecution to picket the Church Office Building as it would be, say, to picket an Orthodox Jewish synagogue because of pique at the traditional doctrine that Jews are God's chosen people!

In other words, except in cases of severely deviant or anti-social behavior, freedom of religious *belief* must not be breached, even in the name of "equality," no matter how galling a particular belief might be to non-believers, or how anachronistic it might seem to the current arbiters of modernity.

descendants had had a chance to receive it. President McKay (quoted in Llewellyn R. McKay, *op. cit.*, p. 231) seems to see no such required delay.

⁴²The now rather well known story about the Church's attempts to get missionary work started in Nigeria has been reported in various places in the news media. See, for example, the article in the "Religion" section of *Time* magazine for June 18, 1965, p. 56; the article by Wallace Turner, "Mormons Weigh Stand on Negro," *New York Times* (Western Edition) for June 7, 1963, p. 1; and Drew Pearson's column appearing in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of July 5, 1962, p. 39.

⁴³See, for example, the account by Karl Keller of his summer of civil rights activities in Tennessee, "Every Soul Has Its South," *Dialogue* I: 2 (Summer, 1966), pp. 72-79. Governor Romney of Michigan also was widely reported in the press to have participated in civil rights marches in his state.

Much of what we do organizationally, then, is scaffolding as we seek to build the individual, and we must not mistake the scaffolding for the soul. . . . We must not lose ourselves in the mechanics of leadership, and neglect the spiritual.

*Harold B. Lee
L.D.S. General Priesthood Meeting
September 30, 1967*

Leaders worthy of the name, whether they are university presidents or senators, corporation executives or newspaper editors, school superintendents or governors, contribute to the continuing definition and articulation of the most cherished values of our society. They offer, in short, moral leadership.

So much of our energy has been devoted to tending the machinery of our complex society that we have neglected this element in leadership. . . . When leaders lose their credibility or their moral authority, then the society begins to disintegrate.

Leaders have a significant role in creating the state of mind that is the society. They can serve as symbols of the moral unity of the society. They can express the values that hold the society together. Most important, they can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations, carry them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unite them in the pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts.

*John W. Gardner,
"The Antileadership Vaccine," from the 1965
Annual Report, Carnegie Corporation of New York*