

tion into a new family, the church. The deceased were thus part of a family that extended blood relationships (p. 20). This seems to parallel both Latter-day Saint genealogical concerns and the concept of incorporation into the "blood" of Israel by adoption.

### 5. *Christianity as a Lay Religion*

Snyder finds little evidence of clergy or even hierarchy in the early church: "There was leadership, but clergy were not divided from laity" (p. 166). Mass had not yet become a spectator phenomenon; religious act and religious actor were one. Social class structures were unimportant in the Christian "small-group caring and hospitality . . . [that offered] deliverance from the personal and social entrapments of "life" (p. 169). Later, however, the post-Constantinian church compromised and altered this earlier pristine vision.

### 6. *Adult Baptism*

The initiatory rite for the early church was baptism, undoubtedly limited to adults (pp. 166–67). Since the baptistries Snyder analyzes have pictorial representations of Jonah being cast into the sea, swallowed by the fish, and spewed out up on dry ground, we can presume that baptism was by immersion, with its attendant overtones of death and rebirth (pp. 32, 40). There is also evidence that the remains of two pools could well have been baptistries suitable for immersion (pp. 102, 117).

Most of Snyder's findings corroborate the Latter-day Saint view of the early church. However, a few of the archeological findings challenge Restorationist views — specifically, the sacrament of communion. Snyder traces two different kinds of suppers: the cemetery agape that was more a social meal eaten in the presence of the departed souls, and a second meal of remembrance of Christ's sacrifice held in the urban centers. In the cemetery religion, the dead were believed to be vitally present, especially on death anniversaries, and were invited to partake spiritually of the meal (p. 18). If we compare the "cemetery" religion and the cult of the dead with Mormon temple rituals, many of which center around the deceased, and insist that a restored church recapitulate essential features of the early church, we might expect the Mormon temple ceremony to include some kind of agape supper. But before Latter-day Saints take this suggestion seriously, they should note that the cemetery meal reverencing the special dead developed into a cult of the saints and a mass celebrated atop their bones.

Latter-day Saints claim that the Reformation did not go far enough and that what was needed was a Restoration — a return to the practices of the early church before the "apostasy." On the whole, this book supports that claim and supplies specific evidence of several practices that are remarkably similar in both Latter-day Saint and pre-Constantinian Christianity.

## A Writer Reborn

*Leaving Home: Personal Essays* by Mary Lythgoe Bradford (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 162 pp., \$7.95.

Reviewed by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, essayist and historian, University of New Hampshire.

AT THE AGE OF SEVEN Mary Bradford imagined herself presenting a story to a New York publisher, the manuscript "rolled

into a scroll and tied with a yellow ribbon" (p. 16). Now in midlife she wonders what ever became of that little girl. "She nags at me — she seems to be asking me what has happened to all those stories and poems I was going to write" (p. 20). This is a bittersweet collection, at the same time a celebration of family life and a confession of failed dreams.

Although Bradford never directly answers her own question, there is an an-

swer found between the lines of her essays. It is an answer familiar to women's literature. Her poems and stories became Christmas cookies and Family Home Evenings and fireside talks and, yes, six and a half years of *DIALOGUE*. Others flourished under her care while her own dreams waited. The dates of the essays in *Leaving Home* tell the story. Five of the twenty-two were written between 1968 and 1972, seventeen between 1981 and 1987, and none in the decade between. While it is hardly surprising that a girl who produced a summer-time newspaper in her mother's kitchen with "a pan of viscous yellow jelly" that she called the Hectic Hectograph should end up publishing a journal from the basement of her suburban Washington, D.C., home, there is also something distressingly Mormon about such a story. That is why the appearance of this volume is so heartening. Mary Bradford, the Writer, is back.

*Leaving Home* is a gallery of Mormon family life. There are comic snapshots (Mary baking the Twelve Days of Christmas or delivering a mustard plaster to the office gigolo), a wedding portrait (she and her husband Chick as an unresolved lithograph), and even a collection of travel slides (with her daughter Lorraine to England and the Philippines and with her son Stephen to Spain). Woven in and out of the various sections are reflections and even advice on parenting, with just enough of Bradford's pungent wit to offset the potential preachiness. Her essay on sex education, for instance, begins, "In fifth grade I read *Gone With the Wind*, deducing from it that if my father were to lie down by me at night, as he was wont to do during my frequent bouts with the croup, I would become a mother" (p. 41).

The richest, mostly fully realized essays explore the author's relationship with her own childhood. In "Yesterday the Wardhouse" and "An Art Deco Childhood" she introduces her readers to the curious corner of Salt Lake City and of Mormondom where her dreams developed. In a wardhouse that was once mistaken for a dairy

she recited scriptures and Dorothy Parker poems, learned to embroider a dishtowel, sang the *Elijah*, wore a drop-shoulder dress in a roadshow, and stood up in testimony meeting to thank God for saving her mother's life. It was in that ward, too, that she met "a certain Mr. Romstoft, who, according to his thrilling sacrament meeting accounts, had survived a hair-raising escape from Russia" (p. 14). For a time he nurtured Mary's hopes of writing for *The Improvement Era*, and he "even talked of laminating my little testimonies for possible missionary cards!" (p. 15) Unfortunately, it was soon whispered in the ward that "the Man Who Knew Tolstoy was living in sin with his housekeeper, a fact that threw doubt on his tales of intrigue about the Russian Revolution" (p. 15).

Bradford writes of a never-celebrated and almost-forgotten Mormonism. The provincialism and the absurdities of mid-twentieth-century Utah are there, lovingly limned, as well as the warmth and the nurturing of children's hopes. Reading about the wardhouse, or the family orchard, or the '28 Chevy that became the protagonist of a backyard adventure series, I began to hope that Bradford's literary "leaving home" would not be permanent. The material she has begun to mine here is as rich in local color and universal significance as Garrison Keillor's Minnesota childhood, the subject of a fatter and more expensive book with the same title as hers (*Leaving Home: A Collection of Lake Wobegon Stories*, New York: Viking, 1987).

In two of her most recent essays, "The Veil" and "Gentle Dad," she reworks these childhood materials to a poetic depth that, in my view, make them the best of the collection. "Gentle Dad" takes its title and central image from an early poem she had never shown to her father. It, like the essay, concerns Leo Lythgoe's relationship with his orchard.

Dad sang in the morning  
As he called us from sleep  
But he sometimes wore overalls  
White with the spray of death

Dad in his reading voice  
 Hesitated over our stories at night  
 And by day his shears  
 Crippled the Paradise trees (p. 86).

The paradoxes of the poem are elaborated in the essay, which brings together most of the themes of the collection, the Art Deco childhood, family love and guilt, the human need for self-expression. Significantly, it ends with a dutiful child's version of the creative child's question: "What has happened to all those stories and poems I was going to write?" Here the focus shifts from the child to the parent: "Why hadn't I spent more time documenting his life? Dad was such a good storyteller. Why hadn't I been less selfish, more at-

tuned to his needs, to the rhythm of his life" (p. 95). The self-deprecation so apparent here is at the center of the essay and accounts for much of its emotional power, yet what is especially moving about this passage is the author's seeming unconsciousness of what she has achieved. Ironically, the essay works because it is about *her* pain, not his. Preserving her own story she has found a way to honor him.

Reading such an essay one wants to prescribe for Mary Bradford a large dose of Selfishness, preserving her from all Good Works for at least the next ten years. To paraphrase the finale of another of her essays, "Yes, they also serve who only sit and write!" (p. 113)

## BRIEF NOTICES

*To Destroy You Is No Loss: The Odyssey of a Cambodian Family* by Joan D. Criddle and Teeda Butt Mam (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), 289 pp., \$17.95.

"TO KEEP YOU IS NO BENEFIT; to destroy you is no loss" is the Khmer Rouge slogan giving this book its title. The words take on stark, horrible reality as the story of young Teeda Butt, a Cambodian holocaust victim, unfolds. Teeda is representative of millions of other Cambodians who were regarded as expendable and were ruthlessly thrust from their Phnom-Penh homes between 1975 and 1979. Forced into slave labor in one of the rural Khmer Rouge communes, Teeda speaks as a survivor, as proof that human dignity can endure in the face of incredible brutality.

Joan Dewey Criddle, a Utah native, has framed Teeda's story as first-person narrative, using facts supplied to her by the Butt family, whose emigration to America the Criddles sponsored. Giving them more than passage, the Criddles offered friendship, space in their California home, leads for employment and education, and per-

haps most important, a way to make their wrenching tale heard.

The Butt family's father and husband was executed for his upper-middle class status soon after the family's evacuation from Phnom-Penh; they lost their home, possessions, friends, schools and places of worship, their health, and happiness. Yet they did not lose faith, determination, or their cohesiveness as a family.

The book, an honest witness of man's inhumanity to man, calls upon readers to go beyond statistics and smug complacency, making intimate the terrible consequences of tyranny. Though the book's happy ending in America is a bit pat, the overall impact is powerful.

Properly, the message in this book is no more for Latter-day Saints than for any who are genuinely concerned with the misery and unhappiness of other human beings. There is nothing in the book that suggests the Criddles' openness is related to their church affiliation or background; however, accounts such as this should remind Latter-day Saint readers of personal opportunities that transcend institutional religion.